

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## GLADSTONE TACKLES HUXLEY.

MR. GLADSTONE finishes his *Good Words* articles on "The Impregnable Rock of Scripture." His remarks on modern scepticism we shall criticise next week. For the present we deal with his attack on Professor Huxley. Mr. Gladstone calls the Professor "the Achilles of the opposing army," and the description is a good one, only the Professor is never fond of sulking in his tent. Huxley is always ready for battle, and we may look forward to some fine fighting when he answers Mr. Gladstone's challenge. *Good Words*, we presume, will not be open to the sceptical Achilles, but the *Nineteenth Century* is available, and no doubt a dozen other magazines would be glad of his article.

Professor Huxley, it will be remembered, argued that the Mesopotamian plain was one of the worst places in the world for Noah's Flood, since it slopes to the extent of nearly six hundred feet, and a body of water high enough to carry the Ark would rush down in a furious torrent, carrying the floating menagerie with it. Now Mr. Gladstone has made inquiries of "an engineer who is in charge of a portion of one of our rivers," and he is informed by this gentleman that "a fall of one in 3,420 would probably produce a current of two miles an hour." Is that what you call a furious torrent? asks Mr. Gladstone; and he goes on to read Professor Huxley a solemn lesson in circumspection.

Professor Huxley is a practical scientist, and knows what he is talking about. The author of *Physiography* can hardly require a lesson in "elementary hydraulics" from a man so confessedly ignorant of science as Mr. Gladstone, and when Achilles gets on the war-path the G. O. M. will probably spend a very bad quarter of an hour. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone's informant is right enough as to the current of a stream, which is continuous until it joins the sea, and of which the flow is only superficial. But we guess the calculation does not apply to a body of water such as Huxley contemplated, the bottom end of which would move in bulk with terrible force, something like the stream of the broken reservoir that devastated the Johnson Valley. This is a point which escapes Mr. Gladstone's attention.

Like the old parliamentary hand he is, Mr. Gladstone avoids answering Huxley's question as to how such a depth of water was kept *standing* on a sloping plain for several months. This question is more important than the velocity of Noah's Ark, and it is quietly ignored.

Not satisfied with giving Huxley a brave lesson in "elementary hydraulics," Mr. Gladstone breaks a lance with him gratuitously on an outside matter. Two winters ago the Professor got into a discussion with Dr. Wace about the Gadarean swine and the devils that entered them. Mr. Gladstone remarks that on this occasion Huxley "touched lofty ground indeed," as though no one but a parson or the G. O. M. had any right there. "Mr. Huxley, as a physiologist,"

he says, "disbelieves in demoniacal possession." True, and does Mr. Gladstone *believe* in it? Well, he will not say. "Such a physiological judgment," he mock-modestly declares, "it is not for me to discuss." How clever! But is it ingenuous? This is really the vital point at issue. All the other points are subsidiary. But Mr. Gladstone evades the vital point again, and rebukes Huxley for saying that the be-devilling of the pigs was "a wanton destruction of other people's property." The fact is, Mr. Gladstone says, the people were Hebrews and had no right to keep pigs; and they were treated like smugglers caught with brandy-casks. He forgets two things, however; first, that Jesus was not a Jewish official, and had no legal right to confiscate swine, nor any kind of right to plague them with devils; secondly, that the Jews were not forbidden to *keep* pigs. Pigs were unclean in Egypt, but they existed there; they were unclean also to the Jews, but they as clearly existed in Palestine. Mr. Gladstone forgets that the Jews were allowed to sell unclean meat to the Gentiles, just as they were allowed to lend them money on usury. So far, therefore, from Professor Huxley's reasoning being "hand-over-head," we think it is Mr. Gladstone who is open to the accusation. He has a wonderful faculty, in these discussions, for pursuing side issues, to the complete neglect of the central points of the problem; and although this may be one of the arts of a rhetorician, it is not likely to convince "the opposing army," or even to make a favorable impression on the indifferentists.

G. W. FOOTE.

## DEAD AND RESURRECTED GODS.

ONE of the most able and notable books of this year is *The Golden Bough*, a study in Comparative Religion, by Mr. J. G. Frazer, a disciple of Dr. E. B. Tylor and a friend of Professor Robertson Smith. Mr. Frazer brings to the subject a most extensive acquaintance with savage life, and with the folk-lore and customs of peasantry, those apt illustrations of earlier beliefs. The title is given by the quest upon which Mr. Frazer set out. This was to discover the purport of the strange practice recorded of the priests of Nemi, that each had to slay his predecessor, and be in turn slain by a successor after first plucking the golden bough. To explain this curious and barbarous custom, which survived into the days of the Roman Empire, he travels over many lands and gathers numerous curious relics by the way. The work is indeed an immense storehouse of information on early beliefs and customs. The explanation in question depends on that belief in sympathetic magic which I have gone into in my former articles on the Brazen Serpent and Salvation by Similars (*Freethinker*, Feb. 8, 1885, and Feb. 9, 1890). The priest of Nemi was the Sylvan deity incarnate in a man who it was necessary should be put to death while in the full bloom of his divine manhood, in order that his sacred life, transmitted in unabated force to his successor, might



renew its youth, and thus perpetually reincarnate itself ever fresh and young; even as nature does in springtime.

In unravelling the mystery of the priests of Nemi, Mr. Frazer has unravelled many other perplexities of early superstition, and in addition, it seems to me, throws much light on the Christian legends, conclusively showing their savage superstructure.

A large portion of Mr. Frazer's great work deals with the myths which surround the phenomena of vegetation. He says (vol. i., p. 278): "Under the names of Osiris, Adonis, Thammuz, Attis and Dionysus, the Egyptians, Syrians, Babylonians, Phrygians, and Greeks, represented the decay and revival of vegetation with rites which, as the ancients themselves recognised, were substantially the same, and which find their parallels in the spring and midsummer customs of our European peasantry." All these gods were said to have died and risen again from the dead. Of Adonis, he says (p. 280), "At Byblus, the death of Adonis, was annually mourned with weeping, wailing, and beating of the breast; but next day he was believed to come to life again and ascend up to heaven in the presence of his worshippers. This celebration," continues Mr. Frazer, "appears to have taken place in spring, for its date was determined by the discoloration of the river Adonis, and this has been observed by modern travellers to occur in spring. . . . Again, the red anemone was said to have sprung from the blood of Adonis; and, as the anemone blooms in Syria about Easter, this is a fresh proof that the festival of Adonis, or at least one of his festivals, was celebrated in spring."

Adonis, according to Mr. Frazer, represented vegetation in general, as Thammuz (Thammuz is still the hot summer month, July of the Jews), represented the corn spirit.

Of the ceremonies used at the festival of Attis, Mr. Frazer says (vol., p. 297): "At the spring equinox (March 22) a pine-tree was cut in the woods and brought into the sanctuary of Cybele, where it was treated as a divinity. It was adorned with woollen bands and wreaths of violets—for violets were said to have sprung from the blood of Attis, as anemones from the blood of Adonis—and the effigy of a young man was attached to the middle of the tree. On the second day (March 23) the chief ceremony seems to have been a blowing of trumpets. The third day (March 24) was known as the Day of Blood: the high priest drew blood from his arms and presented it as an offering. It was, perhaps, on this day or night that the mourning for Attis took place over an effigy, which was afterwards solemnly buried. The fourth day (March 25) was the Festival of Joy (Hilaria), at which the resurrection of Attis was probably celebrated—at least the celebration of his resurrection seems to have followed closely upon that of his death."

When we know that to this day, in Jerusalem, a figure of Christ is placed on the cross, mourned, buried, and supposed to rise again amid songs of triumph,\*—for a description of which the reader may be referred to the *Church Times* of May 11, 1888—can we avoid the conclusion that this ritual is but a continuation of pre-Christian rites.

Mr. Frazer gives numerous instances from all parts of the world of a custom at Easter, May-day or Whitsuntide, of putting, or pretending to put to death, a real or mock king, who in early thought is a man-god. "For we must not forget that the king is slain in his character of a god, his death and resurrection, as the only means of perpetuating the divine life unimpaired, being deemed necessary for the salva-

tion of his people and of the world" (vol. i., p. 228). In some cases, as in Babylon, a criminal condemned to death, was mocked, crowned, dressed in kingly robes, scourged and put to death, as substitute for the king. These personages represent the spirit of vegetation. Why then kill him, and above all in spring when his services are most needed? The answer is, the divine life incarnate in a mortal body is liable to the corruption of the medium in which it is enshrined and must hence be detached. As the sun sets in blood in the west before he can rise in the east, and dies in winter to rise again in spring, so must the god of vegetation die ere he can rise again in new glory. The dying and resurrected man-god represents the yearly decay and birth of vegetation. Let it also be noticed that anciently ceremonies were magical charms designed to produce the effect which they dramatically represent, and that customs and ritual are older than the legends which explain them, and the reader may begin to suspect that the Passion Play at Oberammergau may contain links of survival connecting it with the ritual of Adonis and even with the priests of Nemi.

The inference which a Freethinking reader is likely to draw from Mr. Frazer's erudite work is that like other gods, who died and rose from the dead, Christ is but a survival, embodying more primitive ideas and worships, which explain, as no Christian is able to explain, how it is that a god should be put to death. Mr. Frazer does not draw this inference.

But let the reader, if at all attracted to the subject, carefully peruse *The Golden Bough*, which I recommend as the most interesting and instructive work I have read for many a day. J. M. WHEELER.

P.S.—One word on the Golden Bough. The Golden Bough is the mistletoe sacred at our Christmas festival which as Mr. Frazer says, vol. ii., p. 366, is "nothing but an old heathen celebration of the winter solstice," even as, I add, Easter is nothing but an old heathen celebration of the vernal equinox. The mistletoe was in my view sacred because it was held to carry over the seed of life from year to year. I do not find this idea definitely expressed by Mr. Frazer, but think it may perhaps commend itself to his notice, and I know no one more competent to give an opinion.

## LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—XI.

### ON "WHAT IS THE BIBLE?"

To Archdeacon Farrar.

[CONCLUDED.]

FOLLOWING the law of "accommodation," which is playing as large a part in clerical interpretation of the Bible as it plays in the morality of Jesuitism, you say "we do not know why it was the will of God to select one particular people for his revelations." You also say "we do not know" why he gave the Jews a lower moral code than he has given "us." We do not know, you exclaim, why God "does not give the full day all at once."

This kind of talk is very easy, but you betray its ineptitude when you descend to an illustration. The "boon of anæsthetics" has been "given to men" in this century. Painful surgical operations are no longer necessary; chloroform, ether, or some other substance, takes away all feeling from the patient. Yet our forefathers had to be cut with their senses active and acute; they saw the knife, they felt the incision, they saw the weakening flow of blood. Why was it then, you ask, that God did not reveal the secret of anæsthetics to mankind before; why has he given it to "this particular century"? We do not know, you say; neither do we know why he did not reveal other things in religion and morality.

\* Similar ceremonies took place in the worship of Mithras.—See *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 237, 1890. Mr. Robertson says, "There is every reason to conclude that a similar liturgy was gone through in connection with the burial and resurrection of Osiris."



Do you not see that you are wrecking your own case, and giving away your own position? The "boon of anæsthetics" came to us from Science, and was at first opposed in the name of Religion. God did not give it to us before this century, because Science had not discovered it. And if the analogy is to be preserved, we must say that God did not give the ancient Jews higher truths, because they were not able to discover them; and that he did give them to later people, because they *were* able to discover them. In other words, what you call the Revelation of God does not lead, but follows, the footsteps of human improvement. What men gain by experience and reflection, after many mistakes and at terrible cost, is claimed by the priests as a gift from their God.

With respect to those features of the Old Testament which place it "very far below the New Testament," I have to remark that I do not believe your Church would ever have admitted their inferior, and I will add *degrading* character, had it not been compelled to do so by sceptical criticism. You shrink, for instance, from the brutalities of king David; but when they were exposed by the sceptical Bayle, it was the critic, and not the king, who was overwhelmed with execration. How cheap, then, is your clerical gibe at those who seek to rob young men of the Bible by "laughing at and ridiculing and sneering at certain passages in it." What can a man of sense do but laugh at stories of talking serpents and jackasses, at whales that entertain men in their stomachs, or at women suddenly turned into pillars of salt? What can he do but ridicule the solemn farce of teaching such things to children as facts of history? What can he do but sneer at those who strive, either openly or surreptitiously, to bind the intelligence of to-day in the bonds of ancient ignorance? And how, indeed, can he help sneering at the Pharisees of the Church, who pretend to be the guardians of public morality, and yet insist on the indiscriminate reading, by young as well as old, of a book which contains gratuitous filth and unpardonable obscenity?

Millions of Christians, you say, do *not* believe there was a talking serpent. But you allow that the story is believed by millions of other Christians. They are moved by faith, a principle which you dilute with reason. That you should forbear to laugh at them is natural; they are your own party, they help to maintain you, and you cannot afford to offend them. But the risibility of outsiders is not under the same restraint.

Christians may believe or disbelieve the story of a talking serpent. Such is your declaration. But the story is true or false. If it be true, why should you disbelieve it; and if it be false, why should they believe it? Or is the difference between truth and falsehood of no importance in your religion?

Pardon me for smiling at your advice with respect to the difficulties of the Bible. "Whenever you find a difficulty, lay it aside," is your recommendation. Reading the Bible is like eating fish. Consume what you like, and put the bones and refuse on the edge of the plate. This, however, is precisely the advice of Freethinkers; only they add that when there are bones and refuse, there is nothing miraculous in the fish.

You follow your own advice to the letter. You lay every Bible difficulty "aside." But let me remind you that the difficulties are of your own making, and that you are bound in honesty to deal with them. Blunders, absurdities, fables, legends, obscenities, and brutalities, do not surprise me in ancient writings. I find them in some modern compositions. They only surprise me when I discover them in the Word of God. In other words, they are difficulties on your theory of the Bible, and not on mine.

Instead of dealing with these difficulties, you perform the easy task of citing praises of the Bible

by eminent Christians; a most unanswerable reply to the attacks of scepticism!

That Tennyson and Browning, to your knowledge, were amongst the admirers of the Bible, would be an interesting fact if we knew the nature and limits of their admiration. Byron and Shelley were also among the literary admirers of our English translation, as I am in my humbler degree; but they did not accept the book as a revelation from God.

You refer to Carlyle and Ruskin. Now Ruskin is a Christian, and you are citing one of your own party. As for Carlyle, he appears to have set a special value on the Old Testament, which in your opinion is inferior to the New.

With regard to Mr. Peabody, I do not deny that he "gave a million and a half," but I do deny that this is any guarantee of his competence as a Biblical critic. Let me also observe that Faraday, the great scientist, deliberately refused to let his intellect operate in matters of religion, and that this deprives his judgment of all value. On the other hand, the passage you quote from Professor Huxley is nothing to your purpose. You and your like have no replies to his trenchant attacks on your Bible, but you make the most of his admission that the Bible affords children the sight of a "great historical procession" and a glimpse into far-off times. This admission, however, lends no support to your theory, which he has undermined in dozens of articles, that vainly solicit a refutation.

Your remarks on Charles Dickens (I must say it) are perfectly infantine. In a letter to his son, who was going out to Australia, the great novelist spoke of the New Testament as "the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world," and said that "it teaches the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be faithful and truthful to duty can possibly be guided." Upon this you bid young men to "remember Charles Dickens" when they "hear some person ridicule the Bible."

I have three observations to make in reply. First, the very language of Dickens in this passage shows he was in one of those sentimental moods to which he was prone. Secondly, the New Testament is not the Bible. Thirdly, the parts of the New Testament which Dickens recommended to his son are not likely to be the parts which the sceptic might ridicule.

You forget your own admission that "the Bible is not all on the same level of value." I may laugh at its absurdities, I may loathe its brutalities, I may turn in disgust from its obscenities; but this does not prevent me from admiring its beauties, thrilling at its occasional sublimities, and embracing its scattered truths. I smile at the story of the revolution of the earth being reversed to assure King Hezekiah of his recovery from a boil, yet I admire in the same book the prophet's exclamation "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." I do not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, and I dissent from much of his teaching, yet when he says "Blessed are the peacemakers," I cry, "Amen!" And I marvel that nine-tenths of all the fighting in the world is done by his disciples.

Freethinkers understand you, but you do not understand them. You will never overawe their judgment by reciting the names of lauders of the Bible. They are in the habit of judging for themselves. They know that great names cannot turn falsehood into truth. History shows them that the grossest superstitions have had illustrious defenders.

Nor will you succeed by lying in ambush for their hours of weakness and distress. "The day may come to any of you," you say, "when you are in very great straits, when the brightness of your life is gone, and when you may need consolation; you will find no single book in the world so rich in consolation as the Bible."



Thus you offer your Gospel of Nerves, which every Freethinker will refuse with scorn, however it may be palatable to the audiences you are accustomed to address. It is a gospel for weaklings and sentimentalists, for the blind, the foolish, and the selfish, for all whose life revolves on the axis of egotism.

Too long has the world been drugged by this gospel of "consolation." The anodyne may have assuaged miseries, but it has helped to perpetuate them. What the world needs is animation, the impulse to remove evils, instead of the patience to bear them.

While you are speaking of "consolation," however, you might condescend to particulars. Do you refer to the "consoling" text—"He that believeth not shall be damned"? Or to the text "Many are called, but few are chosen"? Or to the text, "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able"? Or to the text, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever"? Or to the text, "God is a consuming fire"?

Perhaps these are not the "consolations" you mean. You may find them in other parts of the Bible. But how can you tell whether a broken-down, miserable man will light on those parts and be comforted? May he not light on the other parts and be terrified?

When John Stuart Mill, in the days of his early manhood, fell into melancholy, and saw the gloom of despair around him, he found relief from another book than the Bible, and a nobler "consolation" than celestial promises. "I was reading accidentally," he says, "Marmontel's *Mémoires*, and came to the passage which relates his father's death, the distressed position of the family, and the sudden inspiration by which he, then a mere boy, felt and made them feel that he would be everything to them—would supply the place of all that they had lost. A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. From this moment my burden grew lighter."

You see that "consolation," of the noblest kind, may be obtained from other sources than the Protestant fetish. It is not confined to your "single-book." Many have found it, and many will, in the little volume by Marcus Aurelius, which was rendered into Italian by Cardinal Barberini, who dedicated the translation to his own soul, to make it "redder than his purple at the sight of the virtues of this Gentile."

This perpetual recommendation of a "single book" is a trick of your profession. You imitate the gentleman who said there was nothing like leather. But there are other substances and other books. Who knows where is the specific medicine for a sick soul? A great word of Shakespeare, a lovely line of Shelley, a wise sentence of Marcus Aurelius, a single face in a picture, a piece of Greek statuary wrought by one of the masters of passion, a touch of broken sunlight on a landscape, a poor mother's hungry kiss of her dirty child, a strong hand helping the weak, a smile on a child's pure face; these things have found some men in their grief, lifted them from the Inferno of self-pity, brought them back to the daylight, and put them in touch with their kind.

This may show you that "consolation" is available to those who are so wicked, in your estimation, or so lost to decency, as to laugh at "certain passages" in the Bible. There are more things on earth, sir, (I exclude heaven) than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

G. W. FOOTE.

Some persons being in conversation the other day on religious subjects, one of them said that a certain clergyman, who had long been the shepherd of the flock, had become so haughty that he did not know some of the members of his own church. Another said that he must be a singular shepherd not to know the "sheep" of his own flock. A little girl, who was busy at play, replied, "Mamma, he ought to do as grandpa used to do with his sheep—paint their noses."

## ACID DROPS.

Hugh Price Hughes has never accepted our challenge as to the truth of his Converted Atheist story, which we were constrained to call "A Lie in Five Chapters." He stands upon his dignity, and the band of worshippers around him flatter his pride amazingly. One of his Sisters once called at Mr. Forder's and bought a copy of our pamphlet. "Dear me," she said, "how shocking! A lie! Mr. Hughes couldn't tell a lie." Mr. Forder said nothing; he only smiled; but the smile was more expressive than words.

Lie or no lie, Mr. Hughes is often inaccurate. Indeed, his Methodist brethren had to tell him that he and Dr. Lunn had grossly exaggerated the facts in their articles on the Indian Mission. But of course the Methodist brethren don't care how inaccurate he is when he is opposing Free-thought or lauding Christianity.

In the last number of Mr. Hughes's paper, the *Methodist Times*, there is an editorial paragraph from which we take the following: "It reminds us of Shelley's remark to Leigh Hunt, that the world might accept Christianity if that creed was founded upon love and not upon faith." Now Shelley never said anything of the sort. Leigh Hunt's actual words are these: "He said to me in the cathedral at Pisa, while the organ was playing, 'What a divine religion might be found out, if charity were really made the principle of it instead of faith!'" There is not a word here about Christianity, and the words "might be found out" show clearly enough that Shelley meant something entirely new, differing from all existing systems.

What Shelley really thought about Christianity may be found in a letter of his to Horatio Smith, written only three months before his death: "I differ from him [Moore] in thinking it useful to the world; no man of sense can think it true."

So much for Hugh Price Hughes's attempt to convert Shelley. We advise him in future to stick to anonymous shoemakers. It is much safer.

Here is another of Hughes's little jokes. In his sermon on Mrs. Booth he says "I never heard a woman talk nonsense in public, but I am afraid it is the exception for men to talk sense." This is meant to be complimentary to ladies, but the clumsy silliness of it defeats its object. Women must be soft indeed to be tickled by such canting flattery.

"The Christianity of Christ" is responsible for all sorts of absurdity, from Count Tolstoi's teaching of celibacy and racial suicide down to the less sincere but "paying" rubbish of Hugh Price Hughes. This gentleman, in an article on "General Booth's Social Christianity," says that "Christ fed and healed the body instead of the soul." Indeed! When did the feeding happen, and where is it recorded? We are aware that Jesus multiplied loaves and fishes at a religious picnic, but whenever did he give a mouthful of bread to an ordinary starving man, or a day's work to one of the unemployed? Echo answers, When?

Simonides, the Greek forger, is said to have died poor in Albania. He was a learned man, and marvellously skilled in imitating ancient writings. He might have succeeded in palming off his own copies of portions of the Pentateuch as ancient manuscripts if his parchment had not been too new. At the British Association in 1862 he declared he had written the Codex Sinaiticus. Scholars have not credited him in this particular, though there is one at least, the Rev. J. M. Cotterill, who disputes the genuineness of the next celebrated manuscript of the New Testament, the Codex Alexandrinus.

W. S. Lilly, the short robe Jesuit, is credited with writing the article on Renan in the *Quarterly*, which, beginning by calling him a great intellectual force, ends by saying he has added nothing to Voltaire, and "one Voltaire is enough." Quite enough for the Catholic Church. Saying that Renan has added nothing to Voltaire is to say this century has made no advance in criticism on the eighteenth, a flagrant misstatement. The suggestion that Renan is



included in Voltaire is absurd, and could hardly come from anyone honestly estimating the two great Freethinkers.

The *Speaker* has a scorching article on Archdeacon Farrar, treating his flashy, pinchbeck style with the contempt it deserves. No doubt a candid friend will send the Archdeacon a copy, and give him a bad quarter of an hour. We have sent him our own Letter in the *Freethinker*, under cover, so that it may reach him.

In the *Speaker* article there is a good story of a field-preacher who began his discourse—"Paradoxical as my argument may appear to thee, O Lord, it is nevertheless sound."

We are glad to see the *Speaker* protesting against a growing abuse of the novel and the drama. "The mild Agnostic," it says, "is tiresome enough in novels, but to invent inhuman selfishness and label it as scepticism is neither instructive nor entertaining."

There is something quite pathetic in Mr. Gladstone's belated theology. On Sunday morning he attended "divine service" at Rosslyn Castle, and handed up a note to the officiating clergyman desiring him to ask the prayers of the congregation on behalf of Lady Rosebery. Is there any educated man in England who really believes in this cure for sickness? Or has Mr. Gladstone enough faith in it to put it to the test without the collateral aid of doctors and nurses?

Dr. Talmage's church contains several millionaires, and Dr. Talmage himself, it is stated, makes something like £12,000 a year out of his preaching and lecturing. The interest of the Doctor and his millionaires in the conversion of the heathen is shown to the amount of about £50 a year, and when their own church was destroyed, these burning and shining lights appealed to the public for the money to rebuild it.—*Christian World*.

The flowery Brooklyn preacher has now completed his *Life of Christ*, and, according to *The American Advertiser Reporter*, he is "booming" it in characteristic fashion. About 4,000 papers appeared simultaneously with "an elaborate and illustrated review," furnished by the publishers, and the blushing author preached a special sermon on the "Life of Christ" in the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The *Sun* has been letting its light flash upon the Doctor's methods. The book is described as "a rare conglomeration of pernicious nonsense, in which Talmage is held up and displayed and extolled and advertised, while Christ, in the story of his own life, plays a minor part."—*Christian World*.

After months of consideration the Rev. J. McNeill finds he cannot accept the "call" to Westminster Chapel. The trust-deed stood in the way, and the balked preacher now thinks trust-deeds an invention of the Devil. The intentions of the people who gave the money ought not to hinder its being used by any preacher who would like to lay hands on it—all for the glory of God.

One of the *Joyful News* missionaries in China combines preaching the Gospel with extracting teeth. This appears to be thought an excellent way to John Chinaman's heart, but we expect the number of extracted teeth will far exceed the number of "saved" souls.

Another fact for the Christians who tried to make capital out of poor Easton's case, and especially for Dr. Tristram, who thinks he was not insane because he had renounced Christianity—as though, by the way, that were clear proof of a man's sanity. John Dacey, of 41 Tilson Road, Tottenham, committed suicide by hanging. A letter for his wife was found in his pocket, containing these expressions—"I pray that God will forgive me," "God bless all the little ones."

Minnie Gertrude Allen, of Reading, drowned herself in the Thames. In a letter found in her pocket, addressed to her friend, Kate Dormer, she wrote, "Ask the Lord to forgive me," "Good bye, God bless you," and "God bless them all."

In Brisbane, says the *Boomerang*, detectives occasionally post themselves outside church doors on Sundays. A social philosopher, recognising one of these detectives, inquired lately what the reason of this watchfulness was. The detective answered promptly, "Keeping an eye on embezzlers, bank clerks and bigamists." "But," continued the philosopher, "do these people expose themselves by getting to the front in this style?" "Go easy," replied the detective; "I don't mean that they are under the thumb of the law just now, but I'm identifying them for the future. What is your little game?" The philosopher, taken back by this, said, "My little game?" "Yes," said the detective; "as like as not you're dodging round for material for a half-crown paragraph. Good day." "Good day," said the philosopher.

Mrs. N. Sullivan, of Springfield, Ohio, is a member of the Presbyterian Church, and has of late been sitting up at night reading the Bible. The teachings of the old book sunk deeply in her mind. She saw that God was fond of blood, and declared that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. She constructed an altar, and prepared to sacrifice her six-months-old son. She stripped the child, placed it on the altar, and, while reaching for a butcher-knife, relatives opportunely broke in and she was overpowered. She demanded that she be allowed to proceed, claiming that the Lord had commanded her, and declared that she wanted to wash her hands in the blood of the lamb.

The wife of the Rev. Henry Paterson Cameron, minister of Milton Parish Church, Glasgow, has sued for a divorce on the ground of her husband's intemperate habits, cruelty and adultery.

The Rev. C. Radcliffe has to endure eighteen months' hard labor for spoiling the Egyptians at Margate. He "borrowed" some gold rings and kept them, holding that the Lord had need of them. His form of piety was considered out of date by the magistrate.

According to a Dalziel telegram the Nunnery of the Buried alive at Naples has been confiscated by the Governor, and the premises will hereafter be used for school purposes.

A Berlin telegram announces the foundering of a steamer off Cape St. Vincent with a thousand emigrants on board, bound for Brazil. Was their God—as Elijah said of Baal—talking, hunting, on a journey or peradventure sleeping?

South America has had its turn of terrible floods, the Orinoco and its tributaries overflowing their banks and destroying some fifty persons and fifteen thousand head of cattle. At Ciudad, Bolivar, two thousand inhabitants are houseless. God's care does not seem to extend over these districts.

"The *Freethinker*," says "Invisible," in the *St. Pancras Guardian*, "good-humoredly criticises a note of mine, re the Rev. John McNeill. Mr. Foote says, if the Lord were to send him £50,000 it would not convert him, but he would use it for the propagation of Secularism, and further, he would not pay it back till the Resurrection Day. Mr. Foote is artful. He knows very well that on the Resurrection Day all hands will be rather too busy to deal in monetary transactions. If Mr. Foote keeps his cheque till the day after the Resurrection, it might get scorched."

"Invisible" is slightly mistaken. If the cheque could be negotiated we shouldn't keep it till the Resurrection Day. If it made no difference to the Lord we should prefer a bankers' draft or bank notes. Solid cash would do as well as either.

Dr. Brauner, a member of the Austrian Reichsrath, recently lost his wife. The lady desired to be cremated, and her wish was respected. But when the ashes were laid in the family vault at Prague the clergy refused to officiate. They will not countenance cremation. Like carrion crows, they are used to corpses, and will have them.

The *English Churchman* of Oct. 23 cites from a Spanish Catholic organ, *La Bandera Catholica*, a wish for the re-establishment of the Inquisition in Spain, ending with



the following truly Christian utterance: "What a day of pleasure it will be for us when we see Freemasons, Spiritualists, Freethinkers, and anti-clericals writhing in the flames of the Inquisition."

The Catholic and Protestant Churches in Hungary are at daggers drawn because the Hungarian Minister of Public Worship has published a decree providing that in the event of a child of Protestant parents being christened into the Catholic Church, which has hitherto been done at the instance of either parent, the Catholic priest must give notice to the Protestant clerical authorities. The Catholic priests refuse to do this, and the Pope approves their refusal, so it will have to be seen whether Church or State is stronger.

The Reconciliation Service at St. Paul's has led to a long controversy in the *Times* as to the supposed necessity of cleansing from defilement a building consecrated by the Holy Ghost. The Rev. J. S. Brooke says the Cathedral is "dirty," that it is used "as a place to transact business in by men who cannot afford to pay for an office in the city; for assignations made within its sacred walls, and actually where the odds on the racing events of the season have been given and received." If the Holy Ghost hasn't left after this, he probably would not be deterred by a little blood, and if he has, perhaps even the Bishop of London cannot bring him back.

The Pangbourne Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society has been discussing "The Deluge, was it Universal?" Evidently the spirit of inquiry is abroad. Perhaps the P. Y. M. M. I. S. will by and bye discuss the following—"Our Parson: is he as Wise as he makes out?" "The Devil: is he as Black as he's Painted?" "The Bible: is it as Holy Inside as Out?" "The Virgin Mary: did she have Eight Children?"

The younger brood of Presbyterians are getting ashamed of Calvin's creed that there are infants in hell not a span long. It is refreshing to find a few of the older hands trying to stand by the long dismantled guns. Thus the Rev. W. G. T. Shedd, in a text-book on *Dogmatic Theology*, says: "Infants are righteously exposed to the punishment of sin and have no claim on divine mercy."

The Plasterers' Union of New York and Brooklyn refuse to admit Joseph Byron into their Union because he wished to affirm instead of taking an oath. As they control the trade he is unable to obtain work through this disgraceful persecution in the name of religion.

Despite the claims of three millions of English who, according to General Booth, are sunk in destitution, vice, and crime, the Church Missionary Society is going to make another desperate effort for the "poor heathen." Doctors and schoolmasters, as well as ministers, are to be asked to go out to the mission field; and, of course, a lot of extra money will be wanted to pay the piper. Poor heathen! And poor John Bull! who has to support all these religious harpies. If he doesn't mind he'll get the staggers, as sure as his name is John.

The London Congregational Union doesn't intend to let General Booth have all the picking of the "Darkest England" bone. Dr. Parker is going to preside at a special meeting of that body on November 25, and a "Forward Movement" is to be inaugurated.

Dr. Parker, by the way, lately said that the pulpit would never be wise until the pews were. This is making the clergy the tail instead of the head, but we don't intend to quarrel with Parker on this point. We are quite willing to take his estimate of "the cloth."

The *Weekly* takes off Joseph Parker's notions of preaching Christianity in the following lines:

Let Dogma and Divinity  
And Metaphysics die;  
Discourses on the Trinity  
Are generally dry.  
The pious Congregational  
Has found a better way,  
And trusts to prove sensational  
On Topics of the Day.

At a Church Missionary Society meeting, at Reading, Dr. H. M. Sutton said that the doctrine of the Trinity was the great stumbling-block of Mohammedans. They want it explained, and the missionaries find it hard work. The Mohammedans believe in God, but, as Gibbon said, they worship him without a partner or a rival; and "three times one are one" makes the multiplication table do a tipsy dance in their brains.

Educational establishments are awful places when the clergy are not allowed to rule the roost. According to a recent speech of the Bishop of London, a well-known Church dignitary spoke of the Devil pitchforking children into the Board schools. The Bishop does not consider this a "temperate" expression, yet he deplores our national danger of a godless education. For our part, we view the danger with something better than equanimity. The only people who will really suffer are the clergy who supply artificial wants and require children to be artificially educated so as to grow up their customers.

Parson Diggle is trying to get up central boards of administration for denominational schools with a view to obtaining grants for them equivalent to those accorded the Board Schools. We do not think the nation will readily endorse the endowment of denominational education. But Parson Diggle is worth watching.

Sir Arthur Blackwood has been presiding at a National Protestant Congress called to form a union of all Protestants in the country against the encroachments of Romanism. He is reported as saying, "They were at their wits end so far as human help or human wisdom reached." If Romanism could only be stayed by the wisdom of such men as Sir A. Blackwood, Protestantism would indeed be in a pitiable case. But Rome has, and knows she has, a more formidable enemy than the drivelling Evangelicalism of Sir A. B. She has to meet the armies of Science and Freethought.

The Unitarians, it seems, are bent on a forward movement to reach the "unchurched masses" in the larger provincial towns. They find that confining their attention to the cultured and wealthy classes, they make but little headway, and it is questionable if, with the masses, they serve for anything more than a stepping-stone to Freethought.

The "unchurched masses" constitute a pretty big sea to fish in, but we wouldn't give a high price for the Unitarian catch. Unitarianism has never been popular, and never will be, despite its wealth, learning, and ability. It is "neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring," and the people like something decided.

Mark Oldroyd, Esq. M.P., in taking the chair at a lecture on What is Christianity, at Dewsbury, indulged in a deal of rash assertion. He said, for instance "Christianity had liberated the slave, it had exalted woman, and had given us one day in seven of rest." When did it liberate the slave? Slavery existed in Christian countries down to our own times, and Wilberforce admitted infidel France set the example of liberating slaves. How has it exalted woman by commanding her to keep silence in the churches? To claim the Sabbath, which was in existence long before Christianity, is of a piece with the rest of Mr. Oldroyd's ill-founded claims.

A writer in the *English Churchman* wishes to know how advocates of the Higher Criticism, which holds the non-Davidic authorship of the Psalms, reconcile their position with the expression of Christ in Mark xii., 36, "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost," etc. Well, they may well hold that Christ knew no more about the authorship of the Psalms than he did of the shape of the earth. They didn't know everything down in Judæe.

Dr. Jayne, the Bishop of Chester, who would rather see England free than sober, finds the Sabbath has become "a day of sluggish and wearisome inactivity and those filthy tipplings which the famous Book of Sports anticipated as one of the results of Sabbatarianism." Dr. Jayne would substitute "recognised and suitable recreations"—of course not taking place at church time. He does not specify them, finding it difficult perhaps to name any that are not likely to prove far more attractive than church attendance.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 2, Queen's Hall, Nelson, Lancashire; at 10.45, "Is the Bible Inspired?" at 3, "Heaven and Hell"; at 6.30, "A World Without God."

November 9, Grimsby; 16, Birmingham; 20, St. Pancras Reform Club; 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

SPINOZA.—No doubt you are doing good by such lectures and meetings. Still, we hope there will be a re-formation of the Wigan Branch. Glad to receive your good opinion of the *Freethinker*. The paper costs a deal of labor, and is only just beginning to yield a little remuneration.

A. B. MOSS.—When rowdies mean to interrupt and cause disorder the subject is indifferent. We are glad to hear you got on so well.

H. MILLS.—See "Sugar Plums." We are particularly gratified to learn that the *Freethinker* is influencing young men in Manchester.

W. BRADBURN.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. J. GAINES.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. R. CLIFTON contrasts the scene at the Lyric Theatre, which he witnessed, with the stampede in the Chicago church. An actor promptly seized the burning material, and with the assistance of other employees stamped out the fire, while the people kept their seats. There seems to be more cowards in God's House than in the Devil's House.

W. H. S.—French papers are welcome. Thanks.

J. HAMPSON (Bolton) writes: "I am pleased to inform you that the *Freethinker* is circulating more freely here. One newsagent, who did not sell any six months ago, now sells eighteen copies weekly. If newsagents will only show a contents-sheet the paper will go. I always see that mine exhibits it, or I refuse to take what he has left." We hope Mr. Hampson's example will be widely followed. If all our friends lent a helping hand, our circulation may be doubled.

E. POWNCEBY.—Glad to hear the Camberwell friends are helping with the Peckham course of Free Lectures, and that Mr. Ben Ellis is exhibiting posters. Mr. Ellis is a sturdy Freethinker as well as a sturdy Radical, a picked specimen of the best order of working men.

J. F. WATSON.—We have not space to give Cricket Club reports, even when the matches are played on Sunday, though we may give any necessary announcement from time to time in the interest of a Branch.

E. HENDERSON.—Sorry we cannot help you. We have no pamphlet on the subject. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* deals largely with ghost theories. That curate who believes in ghosts should be sent up to London and exhibited.

W. NICHOLS.—You do not explain the reason. Will you give it in confidence?

J. ROBINSON.—See "Sugar Plums." We guess you'll convert the lay helper before he converts you.

G. FRASER.—Glad to see the Reading Branch means business. Mr. Foote could not find time for a visit in October, but he may be able to in November or December.

W. JENKINSON.—We wish the Leyton Branch success, and hope it will be able, as you suggest, to organise open-air lecturing next spring.

J. NEATE.—Sorry to hear the Old Ford effort has not been successful. Still, we are not much surprised. Special efforts of that kind should be made with a background of resources, and with other wise precautions.

W. I. W.—Pleased to hear you take three copies weekly, and that every copy is well thumbed. Huxley accepts the Darwinian theory as no less established than the Copernican astronomy. See his *American Addresses* and his chapter in *Darwin's Life and Letters*.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Menschentum—Freideuker—Freethought—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—La Verité—Boston Investigator—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Lucifer—Ironclad Age—Pro-

gressive Thinker—St. Pancras Gurdian—La France—The Beacon—The Monist—Bournemouth Visitors' Directory—Glasgow Evening News—Mirfield and Ravensthorpe Reporter.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish our attention. CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the cold and wet, Mr. Foote had a good audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, and apparently gave satisfaction by his analysis and criticism of General Booth's book. Mr. Foote will probably deal with the book at considerable length in these columns.

To-day (Nov. 2) Mr. Foote delivers three lectures at Nelson, a small Lancashire town, where the *Freethinker* has an excellent sale. A Branch will be started after the lectures. There are other small towns within easy distance of Nelson, which will probably contribute to Mr. Foote's audiences.

The London Freethinkers' Ball will take place at the Hall of Science on Wednesday, November 26. The tickets are one shilling each, and are only sold to Secularists or their friends. By this means a "family party" will be secured. Hundreds of the "saints," male and female, will doubtless attend, and we think we may promise them a pleasant evening. There will be a smoking concert in the minor hall for those who don't dance. Mr. Foote will be present, and as he doesn't dance, he will have time for chatting. The balance, after paying expenses, will go to the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

Look out for the N. S. S. Almanack for 1891. It will be published next week at the old price of sixpence. First of all, it contains an excellent calendar, freshly compiled by Mr. Wheeler, and giving a vast number of "saints' days" for Freethinkers who want to remember, in the business and pleasure of life, some of the noble dead who have helped to purify and brighten the world. Then there is a full account, and an accurate one too, of Freethought work and organisations all over the world. Articles are specially written by C. Bradlaugh, G. W. Foote, J. M. Wheeler, G. Standring, A. B. Moss, W. P. Ball, J. M. Robertson, R. Forder, and S. Standring. Other pages are filled with items of information and grave and gay selections from Freethought writers. The Almanack will be simply invaluable to Freethinkers. Every member of the N. S. S. should order a copy at once.

Mr. Moss closed the afternoon lectures in Finsbury Park on Sunday. He was interrupted by the Christians most offensively, and several of them ran in front of him, mocking and jeering, as he left the park. Fortunately Mr. Moss is none the worse for their charity. Monkey faces and bestial noises don't break bones.

Mrs. Thornton Smith was unable to fulfil her engagement at the Tower Hamlets' Radical Club in consequence of sore throat. Her place was filled by ever-ready Mr. S. Standring. Unfortunately there was a falling off in the audience. We hope there will be a better muster on Thursday, Oct. 30, when Mr. Moss lectures. This copy of the *Freethinker* will be in many of our readers' hands in time to remind them. The place is Redman's Road, Mile End Road; the time 8 o'clock; admission free, and unlimited discussion.

The Battersea Branch will continue its out-door propaganda during the winter, a gentleman having kindly offered to pay all the lecturers. Only in the event of the weather being very unfavorable will any Sunday morning lecture be given in the Secular Hall, close to Battersea Park.

A Branch of the N. S. S. has been started in the Crook district. It numbers eleven members, but the roll should be largely increased. Freethinkers who care for the cause should apply at once to Mr. John Robinson, 35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law, Durham.

The Sunderland Branch has taken the Albert Rooms, in Coronation Street, and it is to be hoped that all the local Freethinkers will support the venture. Sunderland offers a splendid field for Freethought work.



Mr. James Rowney lectures at the Ball's Pond Secular Hall this evening (Nov. 2). His subject is "The Resurrection." Freethinkers in the district should give him a cordial welcome.

Mr. Thurlow is paying Reading a visit and delivering six lectures under the auspices of the Branch. The Sunday lectures (Nov. 2) will be given in the Foresters' Hall, and there will be a charge for admission. The other lectures will be given on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, in the Lecture Hall of the Assembly Rooms, with free admission. This will give Freethinkers an opportunity to bring their orthodox friends.

Our paragraph brought plenty of supporters to the Manchester open-air lecture station. A ring was formed around the platform, and Mr. Grange the lecturer was safeguarded from violence. Still, there were many interruptions, and the lecturer had repeatedly to ask for fair play. The Rev. Mr. Collar again behaved disgracefully, shouting "It's a lie," "It's a damned lie," and otherwise showing that beautiful spirit of charity which he taxes Freethinkers with lacking. Fortunately the crowd was large, many copies of the *Freethinker* were sold, and more given away, and Mr. Grange made an impression on the more sensible part of his audience. All the Manchester friends have to do is to persevere.

In the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, Oct. 25, Mr. Holyoake gives an account of Mr. Thomas Scott and his connection with Bishop Colenso, whose proofs he revised. Thomas Scott, one of the lesser known Freethinkers, was one of the most ardent and indefatigable. He issued fully two hundred separate works with the object of spreading his views. Mr. Holyoake gives reasons for thinking that Bishop Colenso was acquainted with the work called *A Few Hundred Bible Contradictions; or, A Hunt after the Devil*, by J. P. Y. This was really written by Peter Lecount, who, as a mathematician, went into the figures of the Ark much as Colenso did afterwards. Accounts of both Scott and Lecount will be found in Mr. Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*.

*Secular Thought* of Oct. 18, continuing its reprints of debates, and gives Mr. Foote's article, "Wait Till you Die," from these columns.

Dr. A. Van der Linde the learned Dutch scholar, and Freethinker, and author of a book on Spinoza, and the Spinozists, has produced a new work on Servetus, in which he enters largely into the heresy in the Middle Ages.

The Rev. Isidore Harris has been preaching at the Berkeley Street Reformed Jewish Synagogue, taking for his text the alleged Messianic prophecy in Isaiah's fifty-third chapter, but, of course, using Friedlander's translation instead of the misleading Authorised Version. Mr. Harris rightly insists that the people of Israel are personified by Isaiah as my "servant Jacob." It is the Jews and not Jesus who are without comeliness, and who are prophesied as living to see their seed, which Jesus never did. The chapter, in short, refers to the persecution and ultimate triumph of Isaiah's own nation.

Some French admirers of Garibaldi propose to erect a statue to him at Dijon, but the project is exciting the bile of clerical France.

M. Renan has been interviewed on the new *Life of Jesus* by Pere Didon, which, in consequence of rumors of its heterodoxy, has been selling largely in France. M. Renan finds the work of the Catholic priest a collection of commonplaces "un recueil de banalities." He finds the learning of Pere Didon very weak, and compares the attempts of any one bound in the priesthood to deal with such a subject to one who has to dance among eggs with a bullet tied to his feet.

Mr. W. P. Ball's new volume is now published in Macmillan's "Nature Series." It is entitled, "Are the Effects of Use and Disuse Inherited?" This is no mere question of biological speculation. It goes to the roots of all the great questions of improving man, whether by means of education and social reconstruction or by the elimination of the unfit. Mr. Ball's work, which was recommended to the publishers by Prof. G. J. Romanes, has since been highly commended by Mr. Francis Galton, perhaps the most competent authority living on the

question with which it deals. We shall shortly review the book in these columns.

The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, has published a new quarterly magazine, entitled *The Monist*. The first number contains a good list of contributions, including papers from G. J. Romanes on Physiological Selection; Alfred Binet on the Immorality of Infusoria; Prof. E. D. Cope on the Material Relations of Sex in Human Society; Dr. Paul Carus on the Origin of the Mind; W. M. Salter on the Relation of the Mind to the Body, and others. *The Monist* is strictly philosophical, and rather heavy for the general reader, but it evidently merits the attention of all who wish to keep themselves abreast of scientific philosophy. An interesting feature is the review of the contents of other philosophical magazines.

Dr. Voelkel's *Neues Freireligiöses Sonntags-Blatt*, is giving its readers a translation of Col. Ingersoll's *Household of Faith*. Ingersoll's productions seem read in every part of the world.

The next instalment of *Bible Romances* will be published on November 12. It will be a double number. The title will be *A Virgin Mother*. Besides criticising the Gospel story of the Incarnation, and showing its Pagan parallels, the pamphlet will give some curious bits on this very curious subject from early Fathers and Catholic divines.

#### FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

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#### ETERNAL HOPE.

THE Christians' book declares that God the Son  
 Came down to die, and open up a way—  
 The only way; wherein lost men may run  
 From endless night to everlasting day;  
 And that this "only way" is closed to all  
 Who fail to fix their faith on Christ throughout;  
 To those whose ears have heard no gospel-call,  
 And those who, having heard, remain in doubt.  
 Yet notwithstanding this specific plan,  
 Elastic Christians—those whose "views" are "broad"—  
 Maintain that, somehow, all the heathen can,  
 And will, escape along some other road.  
 They say that Justice ne'er will damn a man  
 Whom neither book nor voice has ever reached  
 To tell the tale of God's redemptive plan,  
 The promise and the threat that Jesus preached.  
 But why surmise that God will mend his way,  
 And cease to be the heartless fiend he is,  
 When hell is on the teeming earth to-day,  
 Whose monstrous woes are no one's work but his?  
 He, now, makes sad and glad just whom he will;  
 Oft virtue starves, whilst vice with cats is crammed;  
 The lord, the slave, the rich, poor, hale, and ill  
 Are here now, and the blest, curst, saved and damned.  
 A God who did the deeds of Bible times,  
 And fills, to-day, the world with blood and tears,  
 Is fit to do, hereafter, cognate crimes,  
 And damn the guiltless through eternal years.  
 But common-sense refuses to conceive  
 A God whose glory grows on sin and pain;  
 It finds it far more easy to believe  
 That gods are merely phantoms of the brain.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Theosophical Father to his infant son and heir, whom he is walking up and down the room at 3 a.m.: "You must be a darned old fool to leave Devachan and reincarnate your Ego here just to keep me awake by bawling with the colic. How many times have you done this before, I should like to know? It's precious little sympathy you'll get from me. You are too old a stager."



## ANOTHER LITTLE FORGERY.

John vii., 8 A.V., reads "Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast." If the reader will turn to the Revised Version he will read in the margin, "Many ancient authorities omit *yet*." What, in the name of the holy pigeon does it matter! exclaims the impatient reader. Thereby hangs a tale. About 270 A.D., a learned Neo-Platonic philosopher named Porphyry wrote a work against Christianity. Like all similar assaults, it was effectually refuted by the process of suppression. All copies extant were burned by order of the Christian Emperor Theodosius, 415, and all that is known of it is what Christian apologists have chosen to mention in their refutations. Sufficient remains to show Porphyry was no fool. Now, Porphyry, so Jerome informs us, cited this passage in proof of the inconstancy of the purpose of the Christians' God. He said he would not go up to the feast, yet he went. Prebendary Scrivener, in his *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, says it is plain that Porphyry, the foe, and Jerome, the defender of the faith, both found in their copies *not*, not *not yet*. This is the reading of the Sinaitic, and is preferred by Tischendorf and Tregelles. The little change, as Scrivener admits, "could not be accidental." It was due, in fact, to the pious but dishonest zeal of Christians, who could not allow that their idol told a fib, or that their God was differentiated from a donkey in changing his mind, one or other of which appears to have been the case in this matter of going to the feast, so they deliberately falsified the Scripture "all for the sake of Jesus."

LUCIANUS.

## SCOTCH THISTLES.

Scotland is at present suffering from a church fever. Church defence meetings, layman's leagues, and disestablishment meetings are the order of the day. In every centre, large and small, the church party is working unceasingly, and the disestablishment party is now on the stump. A plebiscite has been taken in some towns, and in nearly every case the vote has been in favor of the retention of the establishment; in Mid-Calder, for example, it is announced that fully 85 per cent. of all males in the parish of 18 years and upwards have signed in favor of the Established Church. I firmly believe that, if attention is paid to the expressed wish of the majority, the Scottish Church will not be disestablished during the next decade. The establishment has got blind votaries by the thousands who will work night and day for her in the hope that ZION may be preserved in Scotland.

Signs are not, however, wanting that the Scottish people are shaking off their Puritanical notions. During the past summer Sunday orchestral concerts have been held on Portobello Pier, and so great was their success that the largest circus in Edinburgh has been engaged for the coming winter where these Sunday concerts will be continued. In Glasgow, too, some daring spirits have opened a hall where, on Sunday evenings, Secular music is discoursed. The sky-pilots are furious, though impotent. The promoters are within the law, apparently, and defy the men of God.

The Scotch Established Church presbytery held its examinations last week and only one student was plucked, and that, too, for Bible knowledge. A friend of the unfortunate one consoled him with the remark "If to know all about the high jinks of the Patriarchs and the kings of Israel is a virtue, it must also be good to practice them."

For barefaced cheek the Rev. George Wilson, of Saint Michael's Church, Edinburgh, has few equals. A collection was being made on behalf of the poorer clergy and this overpaid functionary had the audacity to tell his hearers (who are chiefly of the working class) that a working man with 18s. a week is really better off than a clergyman with £200 a year. Can impudence go further?

It is reported that upon a recent Sunday, a Scotch Divine forgot his manuscript and despatched the Beadle to the Manse for it. The messenger did not reach the Church again until after the minister had taken his seat in the pulpit. John therefore climbed the steps and handed a parcel to the luckless parson, whispering at the same time, in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the Church:—"Your wife couldnd' fin' to be heard all over the Church:—"Your wife couldnd' fin' your paperie so she's jist sent the book yo copied it oot o'. She says it'll may be dae as weel." R. M. R.

## THE NEW MESSIAH IN ILLINOIS.

Of the modern Jesus Christ, Schweinfurth, Dr. Brown says in *Ironclad Age*:—

"I am pained to write you that the grand jury of this country, now in session, have been disturbing Heaven! The whole herd of angels who people that resort, were summoned on Monday last to appear and testify before the grand jury touching the action of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord, as was his custom when on the earth before, went into retirement, and was nowhere to be found. The registrar stated last night that no evidence appeared against our savior; that his angels, who were all good-looking, but without wings, returned to their celestial haunts, and the bill pressed upon the jury by the prosecuting attorney was ignored. Possibly this statement was a ruse to bring the dear Master from his hiding place.

"As 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church,' so persecution will bind these harmless dolts together, and make them more active in spreading their faith, and in increasing their numbers. Mormonism owes its existence today to the violent prosecutions they have passed through.

"There is no law to prevent a person being a d—d fool if he insists on it, so if these simpletons down in Stillman Valley, several miles from Rockford, and their few imitators elsewhere, wish to believe in the nonsense taught by these donkeys, why let them, that is all. Their teachings are no more ridiculous than what is heard every Sunday, from half a million pulpits, each telling about a *crucified God*, and half of them worshiping his mother!"

## WITCHES.

"In 1730 Professor Forbes, of Glasgow, published his *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*, in which he spoke of witchcraft as 'that black art whereby strange and wonderful things are wrought by power derived from the devil,' and added: 'Nothing seems plainer to me than that there may be and have been witches and that perhaps such are now actually existing.' Six years later, the Seceders from the Church of Scotland, who professed to be the true representatives of its teaching, strongly condemned the repeal of the laws against witchcraft as 'contrary,' they said, 'to the express letter of the law of God.'"

—W. H. D. Adams, "*Witch, Warlock and Magician*" 1889.

The law repealing the punishment of witchcraft with death was passed in 1736. The *Scot's Magazine*, Jan. 1744, gives an abstract of the Associated Presbytery for observing the Covenants, dated at Stirling, Dec. 23, 1743, "complaining of several immoralities, and the repealing of the penal statutes against witches which have been repealed by the Parliament, contrary to the express law of God: by which a holy God may be provoked in a way of righteous judgment, to leave those who are already ensnared to be hardened more and more, and to permit Satan to tempt and seduce others to the same wicked and dangerous snares."

Parson: "Johnny, I am glad to hear that you did not go fishing last Sunday. I want you to tell me why. It was because it was wicked, and you would rather go to Sunday-school, wasn't it?" "No, sir; it was because I couldn't find the worms."

St. Januarius is servile; his blood liquefied for the Bourbon beloved of priests; for Garibaldi, the son of Belial; for Victor Emmanuel, excommunicated by the Pope. He once showed some signs of reluctance when an Atheistic French general occupied the city; but the Frenchman threatened to batter down the Church if the miracle were not performed; and when the tidings of this resolution reached the church, the liquefaction took place. So much better was the living General than the dead Saint.

There is an old negro in Austin, Texas, named Uncle Nace, who is a regular attendant at the church of the Rev. Whang-doodle Baxter. Meeting his pastor the other day, the latter said—

"You seem to enjoy my sermons mightly, Uncle Nace, considering you am so hard ob hearin'," shouted the clergyman.

Uncle Nace nodded understandingly.

"Kin yer hear me when I preaches!" bellowed the colored prelate in Uncle Nace's ear.

The old man shook his head.

"Whaf for den does yer come ter de church?" howled Baxter.

"Bekase hit muses me ter see you ent up dem monkey shines and saw de air wid yer arms."



REVIEWS.

Evolution: True or False. By C. L. ABBOTT. J. D. Shaw, Publisher, Waco, Texas.—Mr. Abbott has put in brief compass the evidence for evolution derived from palæontology, embryology, geographical distribution, morphology, rudimentary organs, etc. He expresses the result in the endorsement of the theory by the most eminent scientists of the day. Concise and clear, the little work should have a large circulation.

Independence. Stanzas. By G. TH. MEJDELL, Christiania, Alb. Cammermeyer, 1890.—This is a curiosity of literature. The author, perhaps from the paucity of readers in Norway who would appreciate him, resolved to make English the vehicle of his thoughts. He taught himself the language, which he cannot speak, and writes it in a style which reminds of "English as she is spoke." The reader commencing with the first sentences "Moving in ranks and files is the tactics of the mass. Co-operation suits the common herd; at every turn they meet with mates of their own kidney," will be inclined to laugh at the mixture of obscurity and colloquialism. If he reads on, however, he will discover a veritable man beneath this uncouth garb. Mr. Mejdell is a man of ideas, and beginning his booklet with a feeling of amusement, we end it with a sentiment of respect.

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President, G. W. FOOTE.

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Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

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"Nothing is impossible with God" says Talmage. "But how could he make your mouth wider without setting your ears further back?" queried an irreverent auditor.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Salvation."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Theosophy: its Follies and Absurdities." Monday, at 8, dancing class (3d. per lesson). Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Wednesday, at 8, Benefit Concert for a member (tickets 6d.). Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Friday, at 8, discussion. Subscriptions now due.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11, "Eight Hours' Movement: by Law or Conciliation? In All Trades or Some"; 7, "My Heresy Now and Thirty-Six Years Since."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band: 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Problems of Life and Mind."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. R. Rossetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"; 7, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Satan." Tuesday, at 8, Mr. T. Thurlow will lecture. Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "The French Revolution."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Capt. C. Pfoundes, "Ethics of Buddhism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3, debate between Messrs. Keen and Clarendon on "The Creation."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standing, "Sermons from Shakespeare, IV."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, a concert.

Cardiff—Queen's Chambers, No. 15 Room (second floor), 6.30, Dr. A. C. E. Parr, "The Aims of Socialism."

Glasgow—Waterloo Rooms, Waterloo Street, 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "Passages from the History of the Great French Revolution."

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. John Grange, 3, "Does Man Survive Death?"; 6.30, "Thought: the Great Want of the Age."

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, Mr. J. Sketchley, "Woman: her Position, Past, Present, and Future." Subscriptions now due.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street. —11, Tontine Society; 11.30 committee; 3, discussion class, "Has any Religion a Monopoly of Moral Teaching?"; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Printing and Typefounding."

Leeds—Cave's Temperance Hotel, Briggate, 3, important meeting of the Yorkshire Secular Federation.

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. Wainscot, "Land, Labor, and Capital."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, a lecture on "True and False, Right and Wrong."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, "Mr. Hodder, "Christian Teachings and Practice"; 7, Mr. Malcom, "Can any Good come from Nazareth?"; Miss Payne will preside at pianoforte.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, musical and other recitals by Mrs. Sidney and gentlemen friends.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, a chalk drawing of Mr. Bradlaugh on view.

Stalybridge—Mr. J. Taylor's, 12 Bayley Street, 7, committee meeting.

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. B. Weightman, "All about the Devil."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E. —Nov. 9, Woolwich; 13, Peckham Radical Club; 23, Hull; 30, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Rusden; 28, Camberwell.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool, —Nov. 9, Liverpool.

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