

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## FIGHTING SPOOKS.

"SPOOKS" is an Americanism. It means ghosts, sprites, goblins, and other such phantasms. The word is not yet endenized in England, but it will probably take out letters of naturalisation here, settle down, and become a very respectable member of the English vocabulary.

Twelve months ago I met an American in London, who told me that he was a Freethinker, but he did not trouble himself about Freethought. His mind was made up on the supernatural, and he did not care to spend his time in "fighting spooks." That is, being emancipated himself from superstition, he was indifferent about the matter, although millions of his fellow men were still in bondage.

This American gentleman's remarks show how people can be misled by phrases. "Fighting spooks" is a pretty locution, and every Freethinker would admit that fighting spooks is a most unprofitable business. But, in reality, it is not the aggressive Secularist or Atheist who fights these imaginary beings. He fights those who do fight them—which is a very different thing.

Let the priests and preachers of all religions and denominations cease abusing the callow mind of childhood; let them refrain from teaching their fanciful conjectures about "the unseen"; let them desist from peopling the air with the wild creations of their own lawless imagination; let them tell no more than they know, and confine their tongues within the strict limits of honest speech; let them do this, and Freethought will be happy to expire in the blaze of its triumph. There is no joy in fighting superstition, any more than there is joy in attacking disease. Each labor is beneficent, and is attended by a *relative* satisfaction; but health is better than the best doctoring, and mental sanity than the subtlest cure.

The clergy are the fighters of spooks. They babble of gods, who get angry with us; of devils, who must be guarded against; of angels who fly from heaven to earth, and earth to heaven; of saints, who can do us a good turn if they are properly supplicated. But the chief spooks are of course the devils, headed by the Devil, Satan, Beelzebub, Lucifer, Abaddon, the Serpent—in short, Old Nick. "We have an army of red coats," said old Fox, "to fight the French; and an army of black-coats to fight the Devil—of whom he standeth not in awe."

Before the great procession of Humanity go the priests. "Hush!" they cry, "the hedges are full of devils. Softly, gently, beloved! Do not rush into unspeakable danger. We will bear the brunt of it, out of our fatherly affection for you. See, we stand in front, on the perilous edge of battle. We dare the

demons who lie in wait to catch your immortal souls. We beat the bushes, and dislodge them from their hiding-places; strong not in our own strength, but in the grace of God. And behold they fly! Did you not see them? Did you not perceive the flutter of their black wings? Did you not smell their sulphurous taint? Beloved, the road is now clear, the hedges are safe. Forward then! But forget not our loyal services. Remember, beloved, that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and—shell out!"

The services of the black-coats are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description. Let them live on *their own* faith, and trust to him who fed Elijah in the desert with sandwiches brought by ravens' beaks.

Clearly the belief in spooks is profitable to the clergy. Just as clearly it is expensive to the people. Whistling between the hedges is as good as keeping a parson. But that is not the priest's teaching. He says the spooks are real, and he is the only person to keep them off. Grant the first point, and the second is sure to follow. But *are* the spooks real? Can the clergy show a single live specimen? They cannot, and they know they cannot, either for love or money. Why then does the business held out? Because an imaginary spook is as good as a real spook, if the clergy can twist and prejudice the youthful mind in their direction. If a showman never lifts the curtain, it does not matter whether he has anything or nothing on the other side.

The belief in spooks is more than profitable to the priests. It enervates and paralyses the human mind. It is the parent of all sorts of mischief. It is our worst inheritance from our savage progenitors. The black spirits that haunted the swamps and forests of primeval ages, and terrified the ape-man who lived in mystery and fear, are not suffered to depart with the ignorance that gave them birth. They are cultivated by priests, and used to overawe the cradles and schools of civilisation.

The Freethinker does not fight spooks. He would not waste an ounce of powder upon them. He fights the fighters of spooks. He assails the superstition on which they flourish. He seeks to free the human mind from gratuitous fears. He dispels the shadows and deepens the sunshine of life.

Surely this is a good work. Whoever takes part in it is giving the race an unmixed blessing. War with the army of enslavement! Down with the seducers of childhood—the spiritual profligates who debauch the youthful mind! Banish them, with their spooks, from the school, the college, the court of justice, the hall of legislation! Let us train generations of sound minds in sound bodies, full of rich blood, and nervous energy, and frank inquiry, and dauntless courage, and starry hope; with faces that never pale at truth, hearts that hold no terms with falsehood, knees that never bend before power or mystery, heads that always keep a manly poise, and eyes that boldly challenge all things from height to depth.

G. W. FOOTE.

## KNOWN BY THEIR FRUITS.

It is often remarked in the pulpits that infidelity would have no standing ground were it not for the bad conduct and disagreements of professing Christians. The assertion is incorrect. Our primary objection to Christianity is that it is not true. We say its miracles are unsubstantiated, its pretensions unwarranted, and its dogmas repugnant to human reason. Finally, we say its history proves it is not divine.

But have we any right to make reflections on Christianity on account of the conduct of Christians? I say we have. First, from its own principles; second, from its practice; third, from the nature of the case. The founder of Christianity laid it down, "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" (Matt. vii., 16). Christian missionaries point out the superior characters of Christians to those of unbelievers. Christian advocates constantly blacken Paganism, that it may serve as a foil to their own faith. Any slip on the part of an unbeliever is eagerly seized as an evidence of the results of infidelity. It is claimed that Christianity is a divine revelation. Surely the Christian theory demands that the revelation shall have brought such a degree of righteousness as could not be approached by any human system. How can its cause be known to be divine when the effects are only such as might be expected from a human system? If divine, it should substantiate itself. If God had spoken, the world would have been convinced and would have obeyed.

But what has Christian history been? A long record of strife, intolerance, and sectarian hatred. This was the natural result of a faith founded on supernaturalism, and claiming exclusive possession of divine truth, whilst susceptible of the most diverse interpretations. It has sown dissension between families, and hatred between races. Its horrible dogmas of hell and devils have deprived men of reason. Under no flag has there been worse atrocities than under the sign of the cross. The ages when its faith dominated were emphatically the dark ages, and its triumph was the overthrow of Pagan civilisation. At the present day our social state is a sufficient proof of its failure. Three-parts of the world refuses to accept this religion, and those who nominally accept it do not even attempt to regulate their lives by its impracticable teachings. A sorry result for a divine revelation. But it is said that all we complain of has resulted from the corruptions of Christianity. Why, then, did not God guard his revelation from corruptions? How is Christianity to be distinguished from its corruptions? The very attempt cannot be made without relying on that appeal to reason and historical criticism which is the method of infidelity. The effort to arrive at a primitive Christianity has only resulted in a multitude of divergent sects, and the conclusion that what is called primitive Christianity was an amalgam of preceeding beliefs, in which strife and contentions abounded. We find no unity even at the fountain head, and, as Paul and Peter differed, so have their followers in all ages; and worse, have tortured and burnt each other

quite persuaded

All the apostles would have done as they did.

The so-called corruptions of Christianity are part and parcel of the religion. The pustules appear on the surface because the blood is poisonous within. Take the case of religious persecution. Wherever Christianity has had the power it has used the sword to suppress antagonistic opinions. In this it is quite consistent. If it has God's authority, it should have absolute power. If it is what it claims to be, the only divinely-revealed truth whereby men can be saved, all other systems are errors, leading men into eternal hell. It is better that bodies should be burnt

here than hereafter. The worst persecutors were the best Christians. St. Dominic, who established the Inquisition, was a pre-eminent Christian, and so was Torquemada, who sought to purge the world of heresy by burning thousands of heretics. A perusal of the history of the Jews, or even a visit to Louis Tassaud's Exhibition of Instruments of Torture, should be quite enough to settle the claims of Christianity to be a divine revelation.

As an organised ecclesiastical system—and it is only as such that it is distinct from other faiths—Christianity has been a fruitful source of misery; inefficient to prevent evil, potent in working mischief. Its whole course has been one continued chart of discord. It has darkened the mind by the gloom of superstition and chilled the heart by the torpor of intolerance. It has set father against son and mother against daughter. It has brought not peace, but a sword. The lamentations which its teachers utter concerning the depravity of human nature are a virtual confession of its failure.

J. M. WHEELER.

## FORWARD.

'Tis not a war of blood; and still a war  
Against all superstition. For mankind,  
Led by the priest, that gaoler of the mind,  
Would cling to musty creeds which tend to bar  
Man's upward progress. Good is surely wrought,  
For liberty, in her triumphal car,  
Rides through the wide and spheréd dome of thought;  
Nor shall the smoke of hell her brightness mar,  
But slowly are we to perfection brought,  
And hearts which have grown weary with the load  
Of the world's sorrow, and its fret and jar,  
Shall with a hope re-kindled look abroad;  
As, through the clearer dawn, there looms afar  
All that we here so painfully have sought.

WILLIAM EMSLEY.

## THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR.

"Brother Smith, what does this mean?"  
"What does what mean?"  
"Bringing a nigger into the church."  
"But he is intelligent and well educated."  
"Who cares for that? He is a nigger?"  
"But he is a friend of mine."  
"What of that? Must you, therefore, insult the whole congregation?"  
"But he is a Christian, and belongs to the same denomination."  
"What do I care for that? Let him go and worship with his fellow niggers."  
"But he is worth 5,000,000 dols.," said the merchant.  
"Worth what?"  
"Five million dollars."  
"Worth 5,000,000 dols.! Brother Smith, introduce me."

## HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forster will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the trunk, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

Ecclesiastical Item.—Teacher; "What are the names of the seven days of the week?" Boy: "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday." Teacher: "That's only six days. When does your mother go to church?" Boy: "When pa buys her a new hat."

## INGERSOLL ON WAGNER.

At the banquet of the Liederkrantz, given in New York recently, Colonel Ingersoll, in response to an invitation, said.

It is probable that I was selected to speak about music because, not knowing one note from another, I have no prejudice on the subject. All I can say is that I know what I like, and to tell the truth, I like every kind—enjoy it all—from the hand-organ to the orchestra. Knowing nothing of the science of music, I am not always looking for defects or listening for discords. As the young robin cheerfully swallows what comes, I hear with gladness all that is played.

Music has been, I suppose, a gradual growth, subject to the law of evolution, and nearly everything, with the possible exception of theology, is under this law.

Music may be divided into three kinds: First, the music of simple time without any particular emphasis—and this may be called the music of the heels; second, music in which time is varied, in which there is the eager haste and the delicious delay—that is, the fast and slow, in accordance with our feelings, with our emotions—and this may be called the music of the heart; third, the music that includes time and emphasis, the hastening and the delay—something in addition that produces not only states of feeling but states of thought. This may be called the music of the head, the music of the brain.

Music expresses feeling and thought without language. It was below and before speech, and it is above and beyond all words. Before man found a name for any thought or thing he had hopes and fears and passions, and these were rudely expressed in tones.

Of one thing, however, I am certain, and that is, that music was born of love. Had there never been any human affection there never would have been uttered a strain of music. Possibly some mother looking in the eyes of her babe gave the first melody to the enraptured air.

Language is not subtle enough, tender enough to express all that we feel, and when language fails the highest and deepest longings are translated into music. Music is the sunshine, the climate of the soul, and it floods the heart with a perfect June.

I am also satisfied that the greatest music is the most marvellous mingling of love and death. Love is the greatest of all the passions and death is its shadow. Death gets all its terror from love, and love gets its intensity, its radiance, its glory, and its rapture from the darkness of death. Love is a flower that grows on the edge of the grave.

The old music for the most part expresses emotion or feeling through time and emphasis and what is known as melody. Most of the old operas consist of a few melodies connected by unmeaning recitative. There should be no unmeaning music. It is as though a writer should suddenly leave his subject and write a paragraph consisting of nothing but a repetition of one word like "the," "the," "the," or "if," "if," "if," varying the repetition of these words, but without meaning, and then resume the thread of his article.

I am not saying that great music was not produced before Wagner, but I am simply endeavoring to show the steps that have been taken. It was necessary that all the music should have been written in order that the greatest might be produced. The same is true of the drama. Thousands and thousands prepared the way for the supreme dramatist as millions prepared the way for the supreme composer.

When I read Shakespeare I am astonished that he has expressed so much with common words to which he seems to give new meaning, and so, when I hear Wagner I exclaim, "Is it possible that all this is done with common air!"

In Wagner's music there is a touch of chaos that suggests the infinite. The melodies seem strange and changing forms, like summer clouds, and weird harmonies come like sounds from the sea brought by fitful winds, and others moan like waves on desolate shores, and mingled with these are shouts of joy, with sighs and sobs and ripples of laughter and the wondrous voices of eternal love.

Wagner is the Shakespeare of music. The funeral march for "Siegfried" is the funeral music for all the dead. Should all the gods die, this music would be perfectly appropriate. It is elemental, universal, eternal. The love music in "Tristan and Isolde" is like "Romeo and Juliet," an expression of the human heart for all time. So the love duet in "The Flying Dutchman" has in it the consecration, the infinite self-denial of love. The whole heart is given—every

note has wings, and rises and poises like an eagle in the heaven of sound.

When I listen to the music of Wagner I see pictures, forms, glimpses of the perfect—the swell of a hip, the wave of a breast, the glance of an eye. I am in the midst of great galleries. Before me are passing the endless panoramas. I see vast landscapes with valleys of verdure and vine, with soaring crags, snow crowned. I am on the wide seas, where countless billows burst into the whitecaps of joy. I am in the depths of the cave o'erwalled with mighty crags, while through some rent I see the eternal stars. In a moment the music becomes a river of melody flowing through some wondrous land; suddenly it falls in strange chasms, and the mighty cataract is changed to seven hued foam.

Great music is always sad because it tells us of the perfect, and such is the difference between what we are and that which music suggests that even in the vase of joy we find some tears.

The music of Wagner has color, and when I hear the violins the morning seems to slowly come. A horn puts a star above the horizon. The night in the purple hum of the bass wanders away like some enormous bee across wide fields of dead clover. The light grows whiter as the violins increase. Color comes from the other instruments, and then the full orchestra floods the world with day.

Wagner seems not only to have given us new tones, new combinations, but the moment the orchestra begins to play his music all the instruments are transfigured. They seem to utter the sounds that they have been longing to utter. The horns run riot, the drums and cymbals join in the general joy. The old bass viols are alive with passions. The cellos throb with love, the violins are seized with a divine fury and the notes rush out eager for the air as pardoned prisoners for the roads and fields.

The music of Wagner is filled with landscapes. There are some strains, like midnight, thick with constellations, and there are harmonies like islands in the far seas, and others like palms on the desert's edge. His music satisfies the heart and brain. It is not only for memory, not only for the present, but for prophecy.

Wagner was a sculptor, a painter in sound. When he died the greatest fountain of melody that ever enchanted the world ceased, but his music will instruct and refine forever.

All that I know about the operas of Wagner I have learned from Anton Seidl, and I believe that he is the noblest, tenderest, and most artistic interpreter of Wagner that has ever lived.

## NON-RESISTANCE.

"I say unto you that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."—Matt. v., 39.

"The truth is that the whole of our criminal law and our police arrangements are based upon a systematic repudiation of the precept in question; and the order of modern society, the security of modern life, could not otherwise exist. In savage communities and in disordered times every man must succumb to violence or must defend himself. In such times obedience to the Christian precept would simply mean the extermination or enslavement of all Christians, the supremacy of the violent by the self-suppression of the gentle. In our days, division of labor is in the ascendant; and we delegate the duties of resisting violence and evil to a professional class. If bad men abound—and where would be the meaning of Christian precepts and exhortations to a Christian life, if they did not?—then, if the criminal class are not to prosper and to reign, police and the repressive and primitive law must exist and act, must restrain and retribute. Who among us would for a moment advocate their abolition? Who that deems it right to maintain them can pretend that the Christian precept of non-resistance is obeyable in these days, or that he is endeavoring to obey it?"—*W. R. Greg, "Contemporary Review,"* April 1873; p. 686.

"I never jump at conclusions," said the pastor. "No," said the elderly member of his congregation who takes liberties, "I have noticed that from your sermons. You reach a conclusion very slowly."

They were talking of a death, when one man asked, "What were his last words?" "He didn't say anything," was the reply. "That's just like him," said the first man, with an approving nod. "There was no gas about him; he was all business."

## AN OLD STORY MODERNISED.

HAD that adjunct of civilisation the modern newspaper existed in the time of Noah, we should have had an account of the affair in this fashion :

## TERRIBLE FLOOD.

## WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION OF HUMANITY.

## ONLY EIGHT SAVED.

(Special to the *Daily Stylus*.)

MOUNT ARARAT, October 17.—A tremendous flood has occurred in this part of the country which beggars all description. For forty days the rain fell in unceasing torrents, causing the water to rise with tremendous rapidity, inundating the country as far as the eye could see. All but eight of the human population were lost. I visited the scene of the disaster and at once interviewed Mr. Noah, the captain of the Olive Ship Company's palatial ship, the Ark. Captain Noah is a very quiet and unassuming sort of man and tells a straightforward story.

## CAPTAIN NOAH AS A WEATHER PROPHET.

"I knew that the rainy season was approaching," observed the Captain, as he invited me to a seat on the spauker boom of the Ark, "because my bunions were paining me, but I had no idea that General Squealy, of the Weather Bureau, intended to give us such a spell of wet weather. However, I started out with an assorted cargo of animals for Barnum's Greatest Show on Earth, over in Babylon. With me were my wife, my three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their three wives. We heaved anchor and started.

## TERRIBLE SCENES.

"It rained and rained and rained, until I thought it must have rained itself dry, but it still kept on. The water was rising at a tremendous pace, and we were sailing gaily along over cities and trees and hills. The scenes were terrible to witness and too horrible to describe. At last I got tired of the dampness, and sent a homing pigeon to Squealy to switch on some other breed of climate, but it never came back. So I sent a second one, and it seemed to have accomplished its mission, for the rain stopped.

"But the worst part remains to be told. We ran ashore, and on the top of a mountain too. It's a blamed shame. But I shall sue the Government for not having buoyed the place properly. Besides, it isn't on the chart, and, last of all, there was no pilot boat to be had when I was most in need of it. It's a blamed shame." And Captain Noah shifted his quid of lotus leaves from his right into his left cheek and winked the other eye.

## WHERE THE BLAME LIES.

From what I can glean from a conversation with Japheth Noah, the blame rests entirely with General Squealy, of the Weather Bureau at Babylon. It is true that Her Majesty Queen Semiramis had sent him on a foreign mission into Media, but he should have left instructions with his subordinates as to the proper handling of the weather switch-board. Her Gracious Majesty the Queen has subscribed one hundred talents to the relief fund.—*Sheffield Weekly Telegraph*.

## FREEDOM.

I honor the man who is willing to sink  
Half his present repute for the freedom to think,  
And when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,  
Will risk t'other half for the freedom to speak.  
Caring naught for what vengeance the mob has in store,  
Be that mob the upper ten-thousand or lower.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

## FUND FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF MR. BRADLAUGH'S LIABILITIES.

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## ACID DROPS.

Some Christians have an astonishing itch for converting Jews. About fifty thousand a-year is spent on bringing the chosen people to Christ—minus, of course, the heavy expenses of the benevolent gentlemen who devote themselves to the holy work. Catching a single Jew gives rise to as much jubilation as is said to take place in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. This is well known to a certain section of enterprising Israelites, who have not the slightest objection to spoiling any quantity of Egyptians. We are not surprised, therefore, to read that a young foreign Jew, professing his desire to be baptised into the Christian faith, has obtained a loan from a clergyman at Hastings; nor are we surprised to read that the same young foreign Jew, with the same anxiety to try the effect of Christian cold water and Christian hard cash, has obtained another loan at Brighton. His ostensible object is to get to Russia—of all places in the world; but while the loan business flourishes it is probable that he will delay his departure from the hospitable shores of good old England.

"Life," the *Christian World* says, "is a prophecy—a stammering prophecy, but a true prophecy—of heaven." We admit the stammering, anyhow. As for the prophecy, it looks rather mixed when we think of the influenza, 'bus strikes, and other ills that flesh is heir to. Still, we are open to conviction. Perhaps, if we shared the profits of the *Christian World*, we should see more in the argument. Do they not say that when an alderman has dined the world is happy?

Dr. Tait, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, has left a record of how he did homage to the Queen as Head of the Church. "I kneeled down on both knees before the Queen," he says, "Just like a little boy at his mother's knee." It was the attitude of a flunkey. Surely a big salary is necessary to console a man for such a degradation.

Dr. Tait tells a story of Bishop Longley. When this ecclesiastic was consecrated Bishop of Ripon by William IV, and had risen from his knees, he was astonished to hear the King addressing him in a loud voice—"Bishop of Ripon, I charge you, as you shall answer before Almighty God, that you never by word or deed give encouragement to those damned Whigs who would upset the Church of England."

"Who is Nettleship?" said Robert Browning one day in his drawing-room leaning against the mantelpiece, and sternly eyeing his querist—"Who is Nettleship? Sir, he is a man who can draw God creating Evil."

Mr. Nettleship's designs in black and white, which are shortly to be published, include "God Creating Evil" and "God in Glory," which Dante Gabriel Rossetti declared to be unsurpassed in conception by anything in ancient or modern art. For our part, we shall be glad to see them. We once published a picture of "God Creating Light," and Christians called it "blasphemous." Perhaps Mr. Nettleship will show us how that sort of thing should be done.

Judging by the correspondence between Father Holder, of St. Joseph's, Dundee, and Staff Captain Broughton, head of the Salvation Army in that city, the statements made in the *War Cry* as to conversions must be taken with more than the usual quantity of salt. Father Holder read in that paper that the S.A. corps at Dundee contains a very large number of saved Catholics, and in particular a family of six was mentioned. He wrote asking for particulars, and the staff captain disclaims having written the report, and expresses his regret at its having appeared.

In the shindy between the rival Christian showmen at Bethlehem, the Greek Archbishop got a crack over the crown from one of the pious Franciscan monks, and three of his followers had to be taken to the hospital. How the Turkish followers of Mohammed must grin at having to keep the peace between Christians at the alleged birthplace of Christ.

The Gospels tell us that the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus cast lots for his suit of clothes, which consisted of a single, seamless garment, that would probably have been dear (second-hand) at half a dollar. Now the Roman soldier who

won the raffie must have been directly inspired by the Holy Ghost, for he not only took scrupulous care of that piece of Hebrew Old Clo', but passed it on to an equally careful person, who passed it on again, so that it ultimately found its way into the hands of the Church. The garment, warranted genuine by God's representatives—and who can doubt them?—is periodically exhibited, for the usual consideration. A fresh exhibition will take place shortly, and we only wish we could take the gate-money for the Bradiagh Memorial Hall.

According to the London correspondent of the *Yorkshire Post* the Irish priests are trying to form a new Catholic party. Only staunch Romanists are to be admitted, and political questions will be subordinated to religious interests. This will be a blow at the Parnellites, but a still greater blow at the other Nationalists. It is hoped that the funds hitherto flowing into the Nationalist coffers will henceforth flow into those of the Catholic party; and if the report is anything but a *canard*, we have no doubt that this *financial* hope is the principal motive of the hierarchy.

General Miller, formerly her Majesty's Consul-General in the Pacific, says of the heathen Indians of Peru, "Three concise precepts formed the foundation of the education system—*'Ama sua, ama quella, ama llulla'* (Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not be idle). These expressions were used as terms of greeting whenever Peruvians met or parted until in 1783 the Spaniards vigorously forbade their interchange, and compelled the aborigines to adopt the Catholic salutation of *'Ave Maria purissima'* (Hail Mary most pure), which was replied to by *'Sin pecado concebida'* (Conceived without sin). This substitution of the dogmas of religion for the dictates of natural morality is very characteristic of orthodox Christianity.

The Church and State Guild has never yet commended itself save to a mere fraction of the Church with wit enough to see that the stage may be utilised and cannot be suppressed. The natural sentiment of the clergy toward the drama continues to be what it always has been—one of dislike. The theatre is a rival, hated for teaching lessons of humanity without cant and dogma, and doubly so for the ridicule which it has been the vehicle of exciting against religious hypocrisy.

John Wilkes, in one respect the prototype of Charles Bradlaugh—for he fought, and won, the same kind of battle with the House of Commons—was one of the smartest hands at repartee, especially in contested elections. He was once wooing a stubborn voter, who exclaimed, "I won't vote for you. I'd sooner vote for the Devil." "Yes," said Wilkes, "but in case your friend doesn't stand?"

*Prayers for Servants* is the title of a manual got up for the class known as "slaveys" and "flunkeys," or rather that of their masters and pastors. "May I obey willingly and with good sense the wishes of my earthly master and mistress" is the general burden of the prayers, which are evidently prepared to endorse the teaching of the Catechism that people should be content with the station of life in which it has pleased God to place them.

The following story of Mdme. Blavatsky and Laurence Oliphant is told by the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—"H. P. B." apparently regarded the author of *Piccadilly* and the creature of Harris as a possible proselyte, and used all her arts to win him to her way of thinking. In the course of conversation, Ceylon was mentioned. "Ah! I know Ceylon," said Mdme. Blavatsky, in her most impressive manner. "I lived there many years." "Indeed," replied Oliphant; "may I ask in what part of the island?" "In —," said the high priestess of Theosophy, mentioning a flat, uninhabitable waste. "In the mountains?" inquired Oliphant, with a grave countenance. "Precisely," replied Madame. Whatever Laurence Oliphant may have thought of Mdme. Blavatsky's doctrines, he did not from that moment entertain a particularly high opinion of her veracity."

Always and everywhere it has been found impossible to think of God as anything but a man; bigger, wiser, more powerful, but still a man. This explains the Incarnation, and the emphasis laid on the second person of the Trinity. It also explains why the Rev. Walter Walsh, the well-meaning, half-hearted heretic of Newcastle, exclaims that "if Christ can fail, then earth is built on stubble and

the pillared heaven on rottenness. If anyone can pluck his sheep out of his hands, then God is a myth, and heaven a fairy tale. Man's highest wisdom is to take refuge in agnosticism or positive unbelief." The last sentence commands our entire approval.

This is from the *Spectator*, the official organ of the Wesleyan Church in Victoria:—"England, not satisfied with sending grog and opium to the East, is now manufacturing and shipping gods to Burmah. It seems there is an extensive demand for these articles, and John Bull, who sends Bibles, is equally ready to furnish idols if he can get a fair market price for them."

Brigands are proverbially pious, and the gang who recently carried off passengers from a train near Constantinople are no exception. According to the *Globe* account, "the captain never neglected to read prayers both morning and evening." At the same time he swore to kill every one of his prisoners if they were not handsomely ransomed. Perhaps the Bishop of Chester will oblige the world with a sermon on this little incident.

Bramwell Booth, the eldest son of William Booth, boss of the Salvation Army, has dropped between two and three thousand pounds. He placed the sum in the hands of a London stock-broker to invest, and the broker has gone bankrupt, and poor Bramwell is only a creditor of the estate.

How many other thousands the pious, self-denying Bramwell may have snugly invested is only known to himself. The Booths pretend to take nothing from "the Army," but they rake in the shekels from somewhere.

J. W. Herwell, trading as Herwell and Co., silk manufacturers, whose pious prospectus we commented upon a few months ago, is in the Bankruptcy Court. Before drawing up the prospectus he spent the whole night in prayer, and he recommended his "dear friends in Christ to take shares in his mill. But it didn't come off, and now a good pious soul, owing £25,818 with only £2,177 assets, is in the hands of the Philistines.

George B. Smith, of Brooklyn, tried to strangle his wife the other day. George was a Christian, not an infidel. He was not a follower of Ingersoll, but of Jesus and Moses and the holy men of old. Here is what the daily paper says about him: "Mrs. Smith thinks that too close a study of the Bible was the cause of her husband's derangement. For the past twelve months he has devoted all his spare time to reading the Scriptures, and he believed he was in personal communication with the Almighty. He imagined that he had been commanded to exterminate his family, and was in the act of carrying out what he believed to be the divine injunction when he was arrested."—*Boston Investigator*.

Piety mingles with the cruelty exhibited in the collection of instruments of torture now on view at Louis Tussaud's. Most of the articles were intended for the benefit of heretics. Even the executioners' swords are inscribed with religious mottoes, and on one is an engraving of the Crucifixion.

The Rev. Ed. Gerrard has been convicted by the United States Court of smuggling opium which he imported in a flower pot planted with a geranium.

The Welsh Congregationalists in conference have protested against "the unwarrantable and baseless charge made against them by the Lord Bishop of Landaff," with a view to prejudice the English mind in the coming struggle for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England in Wales.

Cardinal Manning has issued a new pastoral letter. He is strongly in favor of the Government scheme of Free Education, which he sees will give a fresh lease of life to the denominational schools at the expense of the ratepayers. "We are in a crisis," he says, "the gravest we have ever known, and in all probability the last; and certainly the most favorable we shall ever have of securing the freedom of the English people in educating their children in conformity with their own consciences."

Cardinal Manning's notions of freedom are peculiar. He pretended to be maintaining the freedom of Christians when

he rabidly opposed the entrance of Mr. Bradlaugh to Parliament. He now pretends to be maintaining freedom, when he is only fighting for public funds to assist religious education. No doubt he would burn heretics at the stake with the same cry of "freedom" on his lips.

A very different view from Cardinal Manning's is taken by the Executive Committee of the Liberation Society. In their manifesto they point out the "hardship and injustice" of the present system, especially in the rural districts, where the Conscience Clause is a mockery. They also declare that this Tory Bill is "avowedly intended to perpetuate and strengthen" this vicious system, and call upon all friends of religious equality to secure amendments in the measure before it is allowed to become law.

How amusing are all these Nonconformist speeches and resolutions against the Prince of Wales for playing baccarat! One would think they had only just discovered Albert Edward's fondness for such pastimes, whereas they have known it all along, and their outcry is therefore three-fourths hypocrisy. Even if it were sincere, there would be something ludicrous in their scenting danger to the Monarchy because the Prince of Wales plays at cards. Freethinkers don't care twopence whether he does or doesn't. Their ideas of government are above such paltry personalities. If monarchy is the best form of government, you must put up with a Prince's vices; but if a Republic is preferable, why bother about the tastes of princes and princesses, who will become ordinary citizens whenever the nation has sense enough to manage its own business?

While many religious bodies are now protesting against gambling, they do not mention that the Bible has nothing to say against this vice. It rather seems to encourage it. The number twelve of the apostles was made up by casting lots. Palestine was divided among the twelve tribes in the same fashion. Proverbs xvi., 33, places it under divine superintendence; it says, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

Superior piety does not compensate for superior height in the case of a church in a thunderstorm. On Monday evening St. Nicholas' Church, Gloucester, was struck by lightning, which set fire to the top of the roof. Happily three gallant firemen fought against the divinely-guided destroyer. Climbing up a rod in the interior of the spire, at great risk from the molten lead that was falling, they succeeded in putting out the flames with fire-extinctors. No doubt the congregation will return thanks for this happy deliverance, although it was affected by the firemen in the teeth of Providence.

Some half dozen fortune tellers were on one day convicted at the Salford Police court, and sentenced to short terms of imprisonment. By 9 Geo. II., cap. 5, any person undertaking to tell fortunes may be imprisoned for a year. This was a modification of the old severe sentences against witchcraft. Parsons may tell peoples fortunes in another world, and make a good thing of it without coming under the statute.

Among the Lord's recent blessings are the continuance of influenza and small-pox; storms in Austria, destroying an entire village, and threatening Galacia with famine; continued famine and distress in Madras; forest fires in Canada; Prussian soldiers struck by lightning; a bridge fallen in Switzerland, with one hundred and twenty killed and more injured; earthquake shocks in Italy, and Vesuvius again erupting. Yet some people say Jehovah is dead!

French Catholics are, it is said, going to spend twenty million francs on the Church of Montmartre, erected as an act of penitence for the irreligion of the nation. The Pope has offered a seven years' indulgence for pilgrims to Montmartre who subscribe.

A mock trial of the Devil is the latest Salvationist show in America. There was judge, jury, and counsel, and even a devil's advocate. This gentleman nearly broke the case down, for only one witness swore he knew the defendant personally, and he admitted he had met him in a madhouse. Another witness, who swore that the accused went about as a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour, had to admit under cross-examination that he had no personal knowledge

of the fact, but had picked it up from a statement in a local paper. The Devil was, however, adjudged guilty by the Salvationist jury, and condemned to imprisonment for life.

George Titheridge, a local preacher, who lodges over a Baptist Chapel, Colebrooke Hall, Hornsey, is accused of entering the bed-room of a married woman, who also lodges over the chapel. The lady made a bother, and some of the tenants will have to quit.

The body of the Rev. Ezra T. Shaw, United Methodist minister, Hull, has been found at Humber Bank. There was a shot wound in his head and a revolver lying by his side. The deceased had been in a low state of mind, and it is believed he committed suicide.

When Catholics had no opposition they were very free in permitting Sunday recreation, after mass had been attended. In Spain it used to be common for ladies to go to church in the morning, and to a bull-fight in the afternoon. But with opposition they have got more particular, and the Spanish bishops have brought forward a Sunday Closing Bill to oblige not only Catholics, but all others, to observe the Sundays and religious fast days. The Bill is being opposed by the Liberals of Spain.

On the one hand the religionists are doing their worst to prevent all Sunday excursions, and on the other they are trying to repeal and continually defy the clause in the Eastbourne Local Act by which twenty Salvationists have been punished for making a disturbance on Sunday.

Some of the residents of Hong Kong like to have their religion paid for by other people, and those who differ from it entirely. The Chinese population contribute nine-tenths of the local revenue, yet the Church of England residents wish their chaplain and ecclesiastical expenses paid for out of State grants. Religion is a double blessing when it is paid for by those who do not believe in it.

Dr. Momerie, referring to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, said he had heard of a man whose leg had been amputated and put in a glass case for medical purposes. He moved afterwards into another parish, and died there, but left instructions to be buried as near to his old leg as possible, that he might be sure of finding it on the Resurrection morning.

The Rev. John Chapman asks for a day of prayer whereon ministers of all denominations shall plead with God for the poor Jews in Russia. Here is their God and Father allowing his chosen people to be vilely persecuted, and Mr. Chapman thinks it necessary that he and all other ministers shall join in reminding him of his duty. Truly, as Spencer says, volumes might be written on the impiety of the pious.

E. T. W. Dennis takes the Scarborough *Evening News* to task for poking fun at the miracle we discussed the other day. Our contemporary couldn't understand how engine-driver Hargraves was helped by prayer in that accident on the London and Brighton line at Norwood. Mr. Dennis explains that the man who prays most is the strongest and best. He is replied to, however, by "G. S." and "Incredulous," who leave him in fragments.

A missionary occasionally distributed blankets among the Maoris who attended his little church in the wilderness. Noticing in the case of one worshipper that he came for a blanket rather too frequently, the rev. gentleman told him that he could not give any more blankets. "All right!" promptly replied the Maori. "No more blankets, no more hallelujah!" and departing, returned no more.

Jesus said "Give to every one that asketh," and Paul told Christians not to go to law. But the Rev. E. Smythies, rector of Hathersn, is of a different opinion from the great Apostle and the second person of the Trinity. He is suing an old man, John Turlington, for the sum of £3 6s., money lent, and his latest move was to drag the old man before a judge, upon a judgment summons. John Turlington said he earned a shilling now and then, and was in receipt of parish relief, and on this paltry excuse the judge refused to make an order, leaving Parson Smythies to sigh heavily over the lost 66 shillings—only 6 short of the number of the Beast.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 21, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.; at 7.30, "A New Life of Christ."

## 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.

J. HERRING.—Each must act on his own judgment. We don't expect, and we shall never try, to please everybody.

J. R. BROAD.—Received.

UNPREJUDICED RECKONER.—There was no card in the envelope, and we did not keep the copy.

H. E. O.—You cannot be prosecuted for reading in church—not even in St. Paul's. Don't be alarmed. If they "try it on," let us know.

J. H. CLARKE.—(1) Both Tom Mann and John Burns were once Freethinkers, and we are not aware that they have changed their views. (2) Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* can often be got second-hand for about ten shillings.

E. PACK.—Of course ladies are expected to join the London Secular Federation excursion. It will be a tame affair without them.

L. N. CLIFTON.—(1) There are only two ways of evading the vaccination laws. One is, shifting your residence, so that the officers lose sight of you; the other is defying the law, and risking a prosecution. Of course you must decide for yourself. (2) Mr. Forder will always send a parcel of *Freethinkers* on sale or return. (3) Cassell's new English Dictionary (7s. 6d.) is a good one. (4) Herbert Spencer has an excellent book on Education.

SHERWOOD, newsagent, Snow Hill and Market Hall, Wolverhampton, supplies the *Freethinker*, and L. N. Clifton, 62 Evan-street, has a good assortment of Freethought literature on sale.

MANCHESTER FRIEND.—Thanks for your very interesting letter. Glad to hear our writings have been so helpful in your case. Your subscription is applied to the Voelkel fund.

W. R. MELLOR.—To hand. Will look it through by next week.

W. JONES.—Dr. Jayne's "No hirc, no boy; no cane, no character," has already been dealt with in our columns.

R. BROGH.—We regret to say that Mr. Forder is ill at present. He has been confined to his house for several days. His many friends will be glad to see him restored to health.

QUIZ.—The article was reproduced by us in full. The *Independent Pulpit* office is at Waco, Texas.

H. TOWNSEND.—The letter is too old for comment now. The other matters shall have attention.

T. KENT.—Of course human bones are capable of being fossilised like the bones of other animals.

B. HARRIS.—It is too large a subject to be disposed of in a paragraph. Read *Free Will and Necessity*, by Anthony Collins, published at our office (1s.) It is admirable and clear. You had better try for Mosheim second-hand.

W. MUMBY.—Dr. Voelkel has gone to Zurich. We do not invite further subscriptions for the present, at least until we hear further from the Doctor.

W. HOLLAND.—(1) Koot Hoomi is the wonderful Master, or miraculous Wise Man, residing somewhere in Thibet, from whom Madame Blavatsky professed to receive messages by supernatural conveyance. Now she is dead the world is likely to hear no more of Koot Hoomi. (2) We have already expressed our opinion on the second question. (3) There is not more prostitution in London than in Paris, relatively to the population.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschenthum—Echo—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Reynolds's Newspaper—Auckland Times and Herald—Bombay Gazette—Modern Thought—Rock—Castleford Gazette—Better Way Chat—Nelson Chronicle—Open Court—Halifax Free Press—St. Pancras Guardian—Dundee Evening Telegraph—Atlantic Weekly Constitution—Cambria Daily Leader—Two Worlds—Daily Telegraph.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call 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.

Mr. Foote's audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening was larger than he expected in such splendid weather. His reply to Bishop Jayne was very warmly applauded. This evening (June 21) Mr. Foote lectures again from the same platform, his subject being "A New Life of Christ." Père Didon's work is being loudly trumpeted by the Catholic Church in France. It has gone rapidly through several editions, and is supposed to have settled the hash of Renan and all the sceptical school. Mr. Foote will give some account of this work, and criticise the author's position.

London Freethinkers who intend to join the river excursion organised by the Secular Federation on July 12 should obtain tickets without delay. The price for adults is 1s. 6d., for children 1s. A special steamer is chartered, and ladies may rely on finding what is called "select" company. The steamer leaves London Bridge at 9, and calls at other stages. All the details will be published next week. Tickets can be had from the Secretary, Mr. Pownceby, 7 Finsbury-street, E.C.; from Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.; or from any Branch secretary.

One result of the recent course of Free Lectures at Stratford is the opening of an outdoor lecture station under the auspices of the West Ham Branch. Mr. Alison, 52 Chant-street, has undertaken the secretarial work, and will be glad to hear from local Secularists who can co-operate with him.

Next Sunday, June 28, the Battersea Branch holds its quarterly meeting at 3. All members are requested to be present. Tea will be provided at 5.30, tickets (sixpence each) can be had at the hall, or at 32 Stanley-street, Queen's-road, Battersea. Soirée will start at 7. The Battersea Secular Dramatic Club will give a performance during the evening.

The Summer Conference of the North Middlesex Secular Federation will be held at the Star Coffee Rooms, High-street, Wood Green, on June 21, at 7 p.m., to complete arrangements for a two months' mission in the neighborhood of Southgate. Sunday rambles are to be organised, and lectures or addresses given from place to place. Londoners will find these outings very enjoyable as well as helpful to the cause. Other important business will be transacted. All local Freethinkers will be welcome.—SAM. STANDRING, Sec.

Among all the obituary notices of the late James Beal, the father of London municipal reform, only that in the *Star* mentioned the fact of his being a Freethinker. Mr. Beal was for years President of the National Sunday League, which was started by Freethinkers. The *Star* says he was "a strong Freethinker, but not recently an aggressive one." As a matter of fact, Mr. Beal was not recently aggressive about anything, in consequence of failing health.

Our "sub." has been writing to Joseph Symes at Melbourne, and Joseph's big heart is set dancing by this welcome letter from the old country. He gives a few extracts from it in the number of the *Liberator* now before us, and then exclaims, "What a pleasure it would be to go to England for a few months to see my old friends, and gallop through the country and revisit the spots where I did my best for Freethought many years ago. But there is no trip for me for many years yet; and then, should I go, nobody would remember me."

Don't you believe it, Joseph; don't you believe it. Come when you will, you will find you are remembered. A true man never dies out of a friend's heart. And many who never saw you in the flesh, Joseph, have read about you in the *Freethinker*, and would welcome the hero of many a stiff fight for the good old cause.

Mr. Symes sends a ten-page letter to Mr. Wheeler, which, considering he is always up to his eyes in work, proves he is not unmindful of old times. Alluding to his many struggles, he says: "You'd be surprised how cool I keep. I am sur-

prised. Sleep splendid, appetite good, as light on my feet as ever—at it every morning about seven. They told me I should lose my energy before I had been here three years. Have lost none of it yet.”

Mr. Symes desires to be kindly remembered to all his old friends, and to let them know he is happy in his work. He says he should like to visit England again, but the work in Australia “requires some one to freeze to it and see it done,” and there is no one to take his place. He is engaged on an autobiography, not that he cares for posthumous fame, but his life having been one of continuous struggle, he thinks it has a few incidents that might be useful to struggling humanity.

Fund for assisting Dr. Voelkel.—X, £5; Mr. and Mrs. A. Thomas, £1; Manchester Friend, 5s.; A. Hindley, 1s.; W. Mumby, 11s.

Dr. Voelkel has made tracks for Zurich, taking four of his five children with him. His sentence of twelve months' imprisonment was made absolute, and the other prosecutions that were pending promised several further doses of Christian charity. Dr. Voelkel did not see the necessity of spending some years in a Christian prison, so he put himself beyond the reach of his enemies. His wife remains in Germany for the present, and the paper will be issued as before. Dr. Voelkel appears to be in great financial straits, and the remittance we are sending him will be very welcome.

The Huddersfield Branch had a very successful annual picnic on Sunday. Addresses were given by Mr. S. Akroyd, who referred to the steady growth of the past twelve months, and Mr. H. Smith, who dealt with the necessity of a more rational Sunday. After tea there was dancing on the green sward under a splendid sky, and the day ended happily for all.

The Rev. E. Gough, a Congregationalist minister at Nelson in Lancashire, maintains that all the Bible is allegorical, and that no such man as Jesus ever existed. This view is replied to by “Anti-Mysticus” in the *Nelson Chronicle*. Directly after this writer's letter is a long, vigorous one by “Free-thinker” on Christianity and Secularism. Such correspondence in ordinary papers is of great service to our cause.

The revival of persecution in Sweden by no means intimidates our friends of *Fritänkaren*. The last number contains an article on “The Death of Jehovah” by Victor Lennstrand, who is now in good health and working vigorously as ever.

Dr. Walter C. Smith, the editor of *Good Words*, has recently returned from a visit to Italy. He says he found but a mere sprinkling of people in the churches, and the prevailing tone in regard to religion is one of indifference.

In deference to a public petition with thirty thousand signatures, the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art has been opened to the public on Sunday afternoons. There were over eleven thousand visitors on the first open Sunday.

Mr. W. M. Salter, a leading light of the American Ethical Culturists, has put out a new book on *Ethical Religion*. He contends that religion adds nothing to ethics but superstition, and that the social ideal is the goal of all institutions.

The great prize of the French Academy, twenty thousand francs, has been awarded to M. Elisée Reclus for his *Nouvelle Geographic Universelle*. M. Reclus is generally known as an Anarchist who was prominent in the Commune, but he is in addition a pronounced Freethinker.

We are glad to hear that the recent Conference has done good to the Freethought cause in Birmingham. The Branch is increasing its members's list, and the prospect is every way encouraging.

*Modern Thought*, of Bombay, mentions that it is proposed to print there an edition of Paine's *Age of Reason* for purposes of propaganda.

On the heresy-hunt of Dr. Briggs by the American Presbyterians, Col. Ingersoll says: “Heresy is religious growth. Religion is like a palm-tree—grows at the top. The dead

leaves are all orthodox, while the new ones and the buds are all heretics. The pews are becoming civilised, and the pulpit must keep up with the procession—the Church must advance or die. Dr. Briggs has taken one short step in advance, and before long will take another. The Presbyterian creed is dying, and others will be made. Calvinism is barbarism. On every hand are the signs of the decay of orthodoxy. The evangelical churches are denying that they ever believed in hell. Dr. Parkhurst's address reminds me of the reports of my own lectures.”

Although the ideas of God and of immortality usually go together, they are, as Bishop Butler said, by no means inseparable. Several persons, chiefly among believers in spiritism, have been atheists though believers in immortality. Hudson Tuttle holds this view and in England it has been advocated by Mr. St. George Stock. In the *Progressive Thinker* of Chicago, Mr. E. Palmer argues that the doctrine of immortality is atheistic. He says, If there is a first cause, a supreme intelligence, my existence is the result of *creation*, and my mere existence is a dependent one; therefore I have no guarantee *whatever* of an existence beyond the conditions of my production. On the other hand, if there is no God, supreme intelligence or first cause, I am not a created being, but self-existent; therefore, so far as mere existence is concerned, I am absolutely independent; my annihilation is impossible, my immortality is absolutely guaranteed. I treat the conditions of spirit life *precisely* as I do the conditions of this life, as *facts* that utterly disprove the existence of a God.”

We presume it is Miss Iva C. Craddock, the corresponding secretary of the American Secular Union, who sends us the prospectus of that Union. While we entirely approve of its programme, it strikes us as being likely to lose in effectiveness by its air of readiness to include everybody, whether Spiritist or Materialist, Unitarian or Atheist, Christian or non-Christian. The prospectus includes an advocacy of the pansy as a badge of Freethought. But as that flower is worn by all and sundry in season, it would fail in the only purpose for which a badge can be supposed to be wanted, the recognition of fellow Freethinkers.

“The *Freethinker*, of London, as we have often stated, ought to have a large circulation in this country. If the reader is unacquainted with the paper, we advise him or her to send ten cents to ‘G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., Eng.’ for two or three sample copies. The *Freethinker* is one of the boldest, bravest, and most iconoclastic Freethought journals published. There is not a dull or unpointed item or article in its pages.”—*Freethinkers' Magazine*.

#### THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS.

In one of the theological seminaries, the following bogus list of subjects for thesis writing has been passed round.

“Had Elijah foreseen the manner of his taking away from earth should he have taken out a fire or a life policy?”

“If the receiver is as bad as the thief what was the moral aspect of the prophet's subsisting in the desert upon bread and meat which the ravens had in all probability stolen?”

“Would it have been a mark of a want of feeling or a touching proof of affection had Lot utilised his wife after her transformation into a pillar of salt for the seasoning of his food?”

“Since food is less than three days in process of digestion Jonah must have become part of the whale during the incarceration in the stomach of that animal. Did this fact free him from moral responsibility?”

The questions are not pre-eminently witty, but they show how the mind of the theologian doports itself. Reverence for the old fables is departing.

#### WHERE IS THE GOVERNOR OF THE WORLD?

I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth, of which my whole being is so full; and the effect upon me is, in consequence, as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if I denied that I am in existence myself. If I looked into a mirror, and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me, when I look into this living busy world, and see no reflexion of its Creator.—*Cardinal Newman*.

## OMNISCIENCE AND JUSTICE.

Is God both omniscient and just? Those Christians who say that they would have believed that Jonah had swallowed the "great fish" if the Bible had so stated, will doubtless think it the height of absurdity to doubt that God is so. But the Bible unmistakably shows that he is not. An "Almighty God" must necessarily have the three essential attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; and as "God is love" it is also essential that he should be just. By omniscience I mean knowledge of all things—past, present, and future. Justice does not require desisting.

When "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and "saw everything that he had made," he declared it was very good. Yet he soon found Adam and Eve guilty of an offence which, in his judgment, merited death on the day of its being committed. For some reason, best known to himself, his threat was not carried out, and Adam received instead curses which were sufficient for him, although he lived nine hundred and thirty years; and which, after being inherited by every one of his descendants up to the present time (nearly six thousand years) are still in as good working order as ever.

It cannot be said that God knew that Adam was imperfect and would sin when he declared that the creation was *very good*, unless his veracity be doubted, any more than it can be said that he was just in punishing Adam if he knew at the time he made him that he had not given him sufficient intelligence to obey his maker, and thus save himself and his descendants from destruction.

Likewise, if God is omniscient, he must have known before he created mankind that they would turn out total moral failures, and therefore must be held unjust and cruel to drown all (with the exception of Noah and his family) like rats in the deluge because they turned out just as he expected, and as the result of his own bad workmanship.

When God sent Moses to Pharaoh to try to get permission for the Jews to leave Egypt, God intended to harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let them go. Each time one of the ten plagues had caused such havoc and Pharaoh wanted to let them go, God continually hardened his heart. Truly at the last plague Pharaoh's heart softened for a while, but he soon changed his mind when the Jews had gone, and quickly pursued them, and in so doing received the *coup de grace* from God when he had got to the Red Sea. There cannot be the slightest doubt in this case that God knew beforehand what Pharaoh would do, or rather could not do, as the Bible is so clear on this point.

Again, if he knew that Christ's mission would be—as it undoubtedly has been—a thorough failure, he must be an almighty demon to eternally damn the unsaved majority for not accepting Christ, who has been rejected through the predestination of Jehovah. For predestination is the outcome and equivalent of omniscience. To say to mankind, "Believe and be saved, or believe not and be damned eternally," when being omniscient, God must have known that the majority would not and could not do so through being already predestined by him, puts Satan completely in the shade, and shows the "love of God" to be exactly the same as that which a wild beast has to its prey when it is worrying it. It will be seen that when God is omniscient he is grossly unjust.

After taking the above facts into consideration, without going into others innumerable, and after having weighed the God of the Bible in the balance of Reason and found him wanting, we can but look upon him as a being who is the personification of *imperfection and cruelty!*

Truly, nothing is more harmful to the Christian cause than for men to read the *Holy Bible* for themselves by the light of their reason.

SCÉPTICUS.

The book of *good news*, under your interpretation, tells people not only that they may go and be damned, but that unless they are lucky they must inevitably. Again, it informs another set of inquirers that, if once they have been under what they feel to be the influence of grace, they never can relapse. All must go well who have once gone well; and a name once written in the list of favorites can never be erased. But, if all who have once gone right can never go astray, how happens it that so large a part of the angels fell off from their allegiance? They were purer and wiser than we are, and had the advantage of seeing God face to face. They were the ministers of his power; they knew its extent: yet they defied it.—*Walter Savage Landor.*

## PREPARE FOR MIRACLES.

THE holy coat (*der heilige Rock*), the only garment of Jesus Christ, will be exhibited at Treves for six weeks towards the end of August. It has not been shown since the year 1844. Although a child, I remember seeing this shabby brown jersey under the guidance of my tutor. We were greatly amused at the kneeling mob, who, without a tittle of proof as to the identity of the article, worshipped it, and liberally fee'd the exhibitors. What a state this old garment must have been in at the death of Jesus can only be understood by those who, like myself, have travelled in Africa. A woollen garment, worn a month in the tropics, becoming daily saturated with perspiration, gives off a most unpleasant smell. Anyone wearing it *above a year*, like Jesus, would be considered a dirty fellow, and simply—*unapproachable*.

"Then the people spat in Jesus's face, and buffeted him; others smote him with the palms of their hands" (Matthew xxvi, 67). After such rough usage of the wearer, his coat underwent considerable deterioration, since many—eager to spit—missing the face, must have decorated the garment, which would come under the description of "old clo', dirty and damaged." Let us hope that the Roman soldiers handled it with a pitchfork (*furca*) on casting lots for the distribution of the scanty wardrobe, which, after the "scourging process," must have been in an abominably filthy condition (Matthew xxvii, 30—31). To exhibit such a nasty thing shows bad taste, to say the least of it. *Cui bono?*

CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

## THE GOD'S GOLDEN SHOE.

Rückert, in his "Brahminical Tales," gives a good illustration of the cunning of the priesthood:—

In Mahadura's temple lies a golden shoe,  
Three ells in length. Dost ask, "Who has fit feet thereto?"  
My son, the god of hunting, who these woods doth tread,  
Which so impenetrably o'er this land are spread.  
So rough and thorny is the way that not a god  
Could hunt in those preserves unless he were thus shod.  
Each twelvemonth a new pair are placed that altar near,  
Because the god wears out his old ones in a year.

## PUBLIC USE OF CHURCHES.

The late Professor J. E. Thorold Rogers, in his lectures on "The Economic Interpretation of History," says: "The idea that a church was a sacred place, in which, after divine service was over, no business was to be transacted, is not older than the movement which Laud instigated. In Oxford, St. Mary's Church was, till the time of that prelate, the convocation house of the university, in which academical meetings were held, decrees conferred, lectures given, disputations carried on, and, indeed, all the secular business of the university transacted."

SUPERSTITION.—A tendency to superstition is of the very essence of humanity; and, when we think we have completely extinguished it, we shall find it retreating into the strangest nooks and corners, that it may issue out thence on the first occasion it can do so with safety.—*Goethe.*

THE SOUL.—Reasoning from the common course of nature, and without supposing any new interposition of the Supreme Cause, which ought always to be excluded from philosophy, what is incorruptible must also be ingenerable. The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth. And if the former existence noways concerned us, neither will the latter.—*David Hume, "Of the Immortality of the Soul."*

"ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH BUG!"—When an orthodox Theist gets into an intellectual corner, from defending some of his theories, he frequently seeks refuge in the phrase, "All things are possible with God." This move is a virtual admission of defeat, since it involves a retreat, the retiring contestant putting himself and his forces discreetly beyond the reach of the enemy in a region not accessible to human research. Few will care to carry the campaign into his wilderness, and he himself would hardly dare to enter if he fully realised the importance of intellectual honesty. If the worshipper of a tropical beetle were to turn upon his missionary opponents with one of their own weapons, and quietly assure them that "all things are possible with Bug," he would be proof against a regiment of Theists.—*J. M. Latta.*

## THE ROW AT BETHLEHEM.

THE following particulars of the recent row at Bethlehem are given by the *Daily News*: "On either side of the sacred manger stands a Christian church, the larger one belonging to the Greek Orthodox community, and the other to the Catholic Franciscans. From both churches side-doors lead to the manger in the centre. Following a custom which has existed for many generations, the Greek Orthodox Church celebrates the liturgy every Saturday at the manger, as it is generally on that day that the greatest number of Christian pilgrims arrive in Bethlehem. On the 23rd ult. the number of Christians was particularly large, and the Greek Archbishop at Tabor undertook to celebrate the liturgy. After it was over most of the worshippers went into the Orthodox Church to partake of the sacrament. The Archbishop, however, first stayed at the manger to bless the host, being assisted by the Deacon Dionysios and a monk. On the other side of the manger ten Franciscan monks had taken up their position, and during the ceremony had behaved in such a manner as greatly to vex the Orthodox worshippers. As the Archbishop was about to return to the church, the deacon carrying the host, in walking round the manger, placed his foot on ground which the Franciscans consider as belonging to them. One of them sprang at the deacon, and struck him on the head with a stick which he carried under his mantle, so that the Greek reeled backwards. The Archbishop immediately advanced, and, holding the cross before the Franciscans, sought to protect the deacon with his own body; but sticks were even raised against him. The Franciscans beat the deacons who hurried up to protect the prelate unmercifully, and then withdrew. The three Greeks who were wounded were sent at once to Jerusalem, to the Orthodox hospital of the Holy Sepulchre. Upon the request of the Chief of Police, who was at once sent to Bethlehem, the Turkish Governor sent thither a company of soldiers. Half of them took up their position at the manger, and so divided the Greeks from the Catholics, while the rest patrolled the Christian quarters." Such is the "peace on earth" when Christianity has a free field. Without the "unspeakable Turk" the Christian factions in Palestine would beat the Kilkenny cats.

## LINES WRITTEN IN A PEW.

Could old King David but for once  
To All Saints' Church repair,  
And hear his Psalms thus warbled out,  
Good Lord! how he would stare.

[Added by another hand.]

Or could St. Paul but just drop in,  
From higher scenes abstracted,  
And hear his Gospel thus explained,  
By heavens! he'd go distracted.

[By a third pencil.]

If Jesus Christ should come again,  
And heard this parson's story,  
And saw his striking attitudes,  
He'd hurry back to glory.

## PROFANE JOKES.

"I liked your sermon so much to-day," said an old lady to the clergyman. "Indeed," said he, evidently pleased. "Yes," she went on, "it reminded me of one I read when I was a girl."

"She has given up Spiritualism since she married Farrer!" "Because he objected to it I suppose?" "Yes; for whenever she went to table-rapping Farrer began getting messages from his first wife."

Wife: "Do you suppose the Creator made woman last on the principle the best comes last?" Husband: "Of course not. He did it because he didn't want everything talked about and pulled to pieces and made over."

"This morning," writes a Sunday-school teacher, "I gave the children a little talk about their souls. When I had done, I thought I would ask them a few questions to see if they understood what I had told them. So I began: 'What did God give us besides our bodies?' Perhaps you can imagine what my emotions were when they instantly responded, 'Laigs!'"

## 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.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 8, Mr. F. Haslam, "English Freethinkers of the Eighteenth Century." Monday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Subscriptions now due.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "A New Life of Christ."

Notting Hill Gate—"De ke of York," Kensington Place: Thursday, at 8, adjourned general meeting.

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Mr. H. Snell, "Does the Bible Bear the Stamp of God?" Thursday, at 8, open debate.

Wood Green—"Star" Coffee House, High Street: 7, Summer Conference of North Middlesex Secular Federation.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "The Fall of Man and the Atonement."

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. J. Marshall, "God and Mammon."

Camberwell—Station Road: 11.30, Mr. G. Standing, "Science, the True Savior."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Design in Nature." A special meeting of members after the lecture.

Pinsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Mr. W. Norris, "The Teachings of Christ Immoral"; 3.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Does the Bible Bear the Stamp of God?"

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. C. Durrant, "Christian Evidence."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Christianity and Secularism Compared."

Kilburn—Salisbury Road (close to Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "The Creation."

Kingsland Green: 11.30, Mr. J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "The Age of the Earth." Collection in aid of London Secular Federation Fund.

Lambeth (corner of Belvedere Road, opposite St. Thomas's Hospital), Westminster Bridge: 6.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christ: God, Man, or Myth?"

Leyton (open space near Vicarage Road, High Road): 11.30, Mr. E. S., "Secularism."

Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge Road): 11.30, Mr. H. Hooper, "Christian Theism Examined."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "God's Pets."

North Finchley (opposite "The Swan"): 11.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Why we are Secularists."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Jesus Legend Up to Date."

Regents Park (near Gloucester Gate): 3.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Without God in the World."

Tottenham (corner of West Green Road): 3.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "The National Secular Society."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.30, Mr. Vynning, a Free-thought lecture; 3.15, Mr. C. Cohen, "Christianity and Civilization—IV."

West Ham—Plaistow Green (near the Station): 11.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Christianity and Civilization."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "History of the New Testament Canon."

## COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: 7, Mr. A. Phelps, "Vaccination and Freedom of Opinion."

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms: 2.30, a business meeting.

Hetton-le-Hole—Committee Room, Miner's Hall: 6, important business meeting.

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 7, Mr. Doeg, "Pious Frauds."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints': 6.30, Mr. Parke, "The Life and Writings of Charles Dickens" (with select ones).

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Welch, an address.

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road: 6.30, Mr. Harry Smith, "Body and Mind."

Sheffield Branch N. S. S., Excursion to Shireoaks; meet at 2.15, Victoria Station, train starts 2.20. Return fare, 1s. 3d.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street: 7, business meeting.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 6, Mr. T. Phillips, a reading.

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street: 7, Mr. R. Weightman, "The Design Argument."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Hull—Corporation Field: 2.30, a discussion. All Freethinkers should attend, as it is intended to break new ground.

Manchester—At the corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road: 3, Mr. Parke, "Bible Miracles."

Rochdale—Town Hall Square: 2.45, Mr. Harry Smith, "Co-operation, the most Practical Socialism."

## LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.—July 26 morning, Plaistow Green; 19, morning, Kingsland Green; 26 morning, Battersea.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.  
 —June 21, morning Westminster; evening, Camberwell; 23,  
 morning, Clerkenwell; afternoon, Finsbury Park. July 5, morning,  
 Clerkenwell; afternoon, Victoria Park; 12, morning, Woolwich;  
 19, morning, Westminster.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—  
 June 21, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Lambeth; 23, morning,  
 Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith. July 5, morning, Kingsland  
 Green; afternoon, Regent's Park; 12, morning, Pimlico; evening,  
 Kilburn; 19, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Lambeth; 26,  
 morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith. Aug. 2, morning,  
 Kingsland Green; afternoon, Regent's Park; 9, morning, Pimlico;  
 evening, Kilburn; 16, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Lambeth;  
 23, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith; 30, morning,  
 Camberwell; evening, Lambeth.

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