

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. XI.—No. 28.]

SUNDAY, JULY 12, 1891.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

A NEW FRENCH LIFE OF CHRIST.

[CONCLUDED.]

FATHER DIDON does not condescend to discuss the date and authorship of the four Gospels. One would scarcely imagine that he had heard of any controversy on the subject. In the coolest manner he states that Matthew wrote his Gospel between the year 33 and 40, Mark his about 42, Luke his while following Paul, and John his at Patmos or Ephesus in his old age. He does not inform the reader that not one of these all-precious documents is so much as alluded to by any Christian writer before the second half of the second century. This is a fact he *must* be aware of, and his silence is an eloquent lesson in the candid veracity of Catholic theologians.

Without following Father Didon in his observations on the other Gospels, we may pause to examine his position as to the first. He appeals to "the universal tradition of the Church," but this is useless if the tradition does not extend—as it certainly does not—into the first century after the death of Jesus; for what is the value of a tradition which arises after the document is accepted by the Church, in an age which is several generations from its alleged origin? Father Didon refers to Papias, amongst others, in stating that Matthew wrote "in Hebrew letters for the Jews of Palestine and Jerusalem, in the language they then spoke, which was the Aramean dialect, a mixture of Chaldee and Syriac, the language of Jesus himself." Now Papias is the sole *authority* for any part of this statement. Irenæus, Eusebius and Jerome only repeat and amplify what he said. And *what* did he say? Simply this, that Matthew wrote down the sayings (*logia*) of Jesus in Hebrew, and each reader interpreted them as he was able. According to Papias, therefore, the Hebrew work of Matthew was a collection of Christ's utterances in Hebrew; but our Gospel of Matthew is in Greek, and instead of being a simple collection of *logia*, it is a complete Life of Christ from the miraculous birth to the miraculous resurrection. It follows then with absolute certitude, if Papias is to be relied upon, that *our* Gospel is *not* the writing of Matthew; and if Papias is not to be relied upon in one half of his statement, his authority should not be invoked for the other half. You may accept or reject, but you cannot do either to suit your momentary convenience.

Father Didon carries his judicious reticence to the point of deception. He appeals, for instance, to the Muratori Fragment, as proving that "under the pontificate of Pius the First, in A.D. 142, there existed four Gospels, that the Roman Church recognised no others, that she read them in the same order as they now stand in, that she held them as inspired by God, and written by one and the same Spirit." Now the pontificate of Pius the First, and all the other early successors of St. Peter, is a pious fiction of the Catholic Church. Nor has anyone the right to use the Muratori Fragment in Father Didon's fashion. It was absolutely unknown to writers of

the second, third, and fourth centuries, who could not have been ignorant of it if it existed. It is attributed by eminent critics to all sorts of times; some say it is an original Latin composition, and others a translation from the Greek; and one is bold enough to suspect its being a forgery by Muratori himself.

With respect to the Codex Sinaiticus, the language of Father Didon would lead the unwary reader to regard it as belonging to the second century instead of the fourth; while the reference to the brazen statement of Tertullian that the "autograph manuscripts of the Gospels were preserved by the Church" can only be properly described in language as emphatic as Jesus applied to the Scribes and Pharisees.

No one can dispute Father Didon's hardihood in affirming at this time of day, and in face of the scholars and historians of Europe, that the four evangelists suffered martyrdom in attestation of the truth of their narratives. There is not the slightest evidence, beyond the lying legends of the Church, that a single one of them died an unnatural death. It is also presuming on the reader's lack of critical intelligence to affirm that martyrdom is "of all the proofs of good faith the most sacred, and the most triumphant." Martyrdom proves a man's earnestness, but not his accuracy; otherwise torture should be restored to our jurisprudence. Men have died cheerfully for the most opposite convictions. Nor does it avail for Father Didon to assert that these four martyrs, who were never martyred, affirmed the truth of "facts that were palpable, exterior, sensible, and public, as to which error was impossible." For even if Matthew and Luke believed the story of the supernatural birth of Jesus, which Mark and John were ignorant of; and even if they died the worst death rather than deny it; they could not, from the very nature of the case, affirm anything but their belief in the veracity of the person who told them. It was not a matter on which they could have had the slightest first-hand information.

Connected with the miraculous birth of Jesus—to pursue the illustration—are the story of the Magi and the chronology of Luke. With respect to the former, Father Didon writes at length, and with a great parade of questionable learning, about the conjecture of Kepler, that the Star of the Nativity was the same which appeared in 1603-4 in the constellation of the Serpent. But what has this to do with the star of the Gospel, which acted as a Cook's tourist agent to the Magi, leading them to Bethlehem, and finally resting over the house in which the infant Jesus was cradled? Over what city, over what house, is *any* star? Does not the simplest reader see that the Star of the Nativity belongs to the astronomy of faith?

Father Didon is more ingenious than ingenuous in his long appendix on the chronology of Luke. This evangelist tells us that Jesus was born when Joseph and Mary went up to Bethlehem to be taxed. Augustus Cæsar had issued a decree "that all the world should be taxed," and "this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." Now

there is no evidence of any such decree. Mommsen, the great historian of Rome, denies its possibility, and sneers at the theologians who falsify history in the interest of their dogmas. We know also from Josephus that Cyrenius was not governor of Syria until seven years after the supposed birth of Christ. This is a fatal discrepancy, and the theologians have exercised their ingenuity in attempting to remove it. Some resort to artful translations of the passage. This is resented, however, by Father Didon, who argues that Cyrenius may have been sent into Judæa as census-taker; afterwards he became governor of Syria; and this is what Luke really means—only the explanation saves the evangelist's chronology at the expense of his grammar.

Another ingenuity of Father Didon's is reconciling Mark and John in respect to the hour of the Crucifixion. According to Mark, it was the third hour (9 a.m.) when Jesus was crucified, while according to John the trial was still proceeding at the sixth hour (12 a.m.) before Pilate. This contradiction, however, is disposed of in the airiest fashion by Father Didon. "St. John," he remarks, "says about the sixth hour; St. Mark says the ninth. The contradiction is only apparent. We know that the Jews had only four hours for dividing the day—the first, the third, the sixth, and the ninth; corresponding to our six, nine, twelve, and three o'clock. St. John's expression should be understood to mean the time between nine o'clock and midday, rather nearer midday than nine o'clock."

This is a peculiar hodge-podge. Father Didon has completely reversed the contradiction between Mark and John. The *sixth* hour of John is while the trial is going on, the *ninth* hour of Mark is when Jesus expires after being six hours upon the cross. If Father Didon is not guilty of this confusion, he is guilty of a worse one; for in that case he has deliberately kept John's time in the Jewish measure and turned Mark's into the English measure; which is as bad as card-sharping. Nor, again, is it true that the Jewish day was not divided into twelve hours. The very Gospels might have informed Father Didon on this point. "Are there not twelve hours in the day," said Jesus to his disciples (John xi., 9). Father Didon should at least read the Gospels before writing a Life of Christ.

In relating the Crucifixion, after the manner of the Romantic school, Father Didon improves upon the Gospels. He tells us that the cross laid upon Simon's shoulders saved him and all who belonged to him; he, his wife, and his two sons, became Christians, and died in the odor of sanctity. We are also told of Saint Veronica (a curious name for a Jewess!) who gave Jesus her handkerchief to wipe his stained and bleeding face. But Father Didon discreetly omits the rest of this holy legend. When Veronica received her handkerchief from Jesus, it bore the print of his features; of course it was treasured by the Church, and exhibited—for the usual consideration. It seems, however, to have disappeared; but we believe that *copies* are still hawked through Europe by priestly impostors.

Father Didon does not discuss the story of the Resurrection. He neither examines the witnesses nor replies to sceptical objections. An easier course is adopted. "To deny the Resurrection of Jesus," he cries, "is to create another—the founding of Christianity by victims of hallucination." But this is not such a gigantic miracle as Father Didon imagines. Religions are nearly always *founded*, or at least *started*, by hallucinate men and women. Read the early history of Wesleyanism, read the story of Mormonism, read the account of the Jezreelites. It is no miracle for people to be deceived or deceivers; it is a miracle for a man to rise from the dead. The Resurrection, therefore, must be *proved*, and Father Didon evades his real duty.

G. W. FOOTE.

SOMETHING INSTEAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

WHEN Freethinkers challenge the absurdities of the orthodox faith, they are usually met with the question—What have you to give us in its place? People brought up in the conviction that the Christian religion is divine shrink from relinquishing it. It has the charm of old associations, and they feel as if, when they gave up their faith, there was no solid ground whereon to rest their conduct. With such timid natures we sympathise, though we can but remind them that the first question concerning any religion is—Is it true? In place of a falsity we do not need another one. If Christianity is a superstition, we do not need a fresh superstition to replace it. Those who hold that Christianity is a false and superstitious system think that all that is required is a knowledge of the natural truths which Christianity obscures, and which must necessarily replace it when it is destroyed.

The question to my mind is one which in itself indicates the Christian method is a wrong one. It is as though a patient were to say to his physician, "Well, doctor, if you take away my influenza, what do you propose giving me instead?" Religion has made the attitude of the human mind one of submission to the supernatural, and when it is proposed to dispense with this the religious person feels like a cripple never taught to walk erect, to whom it is suggested that he should throw away his crutches. Freethinkers say that the rejection of the fables, fictions and false dogmas of any system of superstition in which a man has been educated, leaves him in a healthy mental condition favorable to the assimilation of the proper food of the human mind. When a man gives up his superstition, all his emotions and aspirations remain, but, instead of being diverted to imaginary beings and futile ends, they may be directed to actual persons and to tangible objects.

Freethought offers a good exchange for the resignation of supernatural hopes and fears. For trust in Providence substitute attention to material conditions. Instead of worshipping a God who cannot possibly profit by your adoration, seek to improve the condition of human beings who need your love and service. Instead of placing the golden age in the past, you can look forward to and work for it in the future.

The characteristic doctrines of Christianity need little regret. One should not demand compensation for the loss of belief in a devil and eternity of torture in a lake of fire and brimstone. The doctrine of a wrathful God, only to be appeased by the sacrifice of his own son, is one which it should be a relief to resign.

Suppose the belief in the divinity of the Bible and Christianity removed; would the nature of things be one whit different? All would be the same. Our human social institutions would remain. The world without God would be at least as happy and as moral as now. But suppose, instead, all human institutions for the maintenance of morality were abolished, laws, police-courts, magistrates, and gaols annihilated, would all the elaborate machinery and most strenuous efforts of religious establishments suffice? The actual loss in resigning Christianity is nothing, and the sentimental loss is soon effaced. This world affords sufficient scope for all our energies. For every false doctrine given up there are ample truths with which it may be replaced. Instead of believing in the fables of the Bible, one may learn the facts of science. A knowledge of our own anatomy is more important than the belief that woman was made from man's rib. To understand the facts of geology is better than to believe the world was made in six days, and the facts of astronomy are of more concern than the story of Joshua stopping the sun. For the characters held up to imitation in the Bible, cheat

like Jacob, murderers like David, regard the good and great of all ages and nations, not reverencing them as idols, but respecting them as fellow men. Instead of the doctrine of salvation from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, recognise the impressive truth that repentance does not wipe away the consequences of our actions. Instead of believing in the arbitrary rewards and punishments of a future world learn the natural and inevitable sequences of this. For prayer substitute performance. The soldier need not trust in God, who, as Napoleon said, is always on the side of the biggest battalions, but he must keep his powder dry.

In place of belief in the magical efficacy of baptism to remove your sins, suppose you substitute the daily practice of bathing. Water is physically efficacious, though no chemistry has demonstrated its spiritual qualities, when unmixed with alcohol. Soap is a surer purifier than the blood of the lamb. Cleanliness is good, however dubious godliness may be. Instead of exhorting men to prepare for death, teach them how best to live. In place of observing the Sabbath with fear and trembling before the Lord, improve the day of leisure to your own health and recreation. Instead of building churches to the glory of God, build schools, libraries and public institutions for the benefit of men. In short, replace religion with Secularism, and you will find you have done well for yourself and well for those who come after you. Had men but served humanity with half the zeal with which they have served their gods, we should now have fewer evils to deplore.

J. M. WHEELER.

ETERNAL LIFE.

BY DR. GEORGE M. GOULD.

SUPPOSE now we divest ourselves of the creeps and shudders usually accompanying a discussion of death and immortality, and fearlessly test the common dogma with a little analysis in the light of scientific research and reason. Let us suppose you are a believer: what is it you believe? You desire: what is it you desire, and how far is your desire feasible? You are convinced: but what is the truth? If possible, in what way and to what extent is a future life possible? If attainable, by whom and by what means? Moreover, the *kind* of belief makes all the difference in the world. I have read somewhere about an African chief who killed his wife's lover, and was defeated at last by his wife's unswerving belief in immortality, she committing suicide in order to join her lover. But the chief was equal to the emergency, and he in turn killed himself in order to follow the pair and break up their tête-à-têtes in the other world! It all depends upon what you propose doing with a future life after you get it. You might just as well be digging clams on this earth as "singing Hosannas around the throne" in heaven.

Do you believe in or fervently desire what, with splendid bravery and *abandon*, the old creed called "the resurrection of the body"? Terrible counter-queries arise: At what age in your life would you choose as best representing the ideal body for your resurrection? Would you prefer your body as it was when you were a child, when youthful, when mature, or when old? Moreover, it is changing every minute, this body. It is estimated that something like five million blood corpuscles die every second of your life. Even the two or three pounds of minerals in one's bones are only a little more permanently fixed. All component parts are undergoing change every instant; they soon become grass, grain, or tree, passing again into others' bodies, and so on for ever. Is it the form and feature you desire to preserve, and not the constituent particles? But form and feature change every day or year, and are as impossible to fix as the atoms themselves. Indeed, is not the whole matter put beyond choice by the evident fact that, unless by the fiat of an extramundane deity, the only moment possible to fix the bodily form in the mould of eternity would be the death-moment? And yet this were the most undesirable of all seasons, since at that hour the body is in the weakest, most useless, and most wretched condition of all the hours it has served us. Supposing, therefore, that you are so in love with your own

body that you would wish to call it into life again and for ever, we see at once that no moment or phase of development could be chosen, except perhaps the dying moment, the least desirable of all, and that the particles of one's body have served their turn in myriad other bodies, each having an equally valid claim to his "property." Besides this, the absurdity of the whole is emphasised by the crushing fact that all the organic matter of the world has been used over and over for bodies, and the earth has not enough hydrocarbons to fit out again with bodies a small fraction of the souls that have lived upon it. Doubtless the combined weight of all the organic bodies that have lived on the earth would be many times the total weight of the globe, including its minerals, elements, and gases. It may be frankly admitted that no bodily resurrection is possible.

And it is as certainly undesirable. The old dogma was the crudest materialism, wholly unworthy of the credence of those who pretended to believe that God was a spirit, and that they were his children. The belief in bodily resurrection was a natural concomitant of the age of sensualism, before the mind and spirit had risen to their modern heritage. The desire for such a resurrection stamps the person with a self-confessed imperfection of mental and moral development. The impossibility of such a resurrection is one of many proofs that life is no sensualist at heart, and that ideality is the final outcome, the trend of actuality. Nature compels us to take wings, though the sluggish Psyche lingers lovingly in the pretty little cocoon of materiality she has built about herself.

Is it perhaps your understanding, reason, or intellect that you desire to perpetuate for ever? Frankly, now, are you so in love with your mental outfit? In your more modest and sane hours are you not sadly conscious how very imperfect it is? While we are young and very conceited we may be filled with self-satisfaction and trust in our own judgment; but as the years drag by, we, looking back over the past, grow more and more conscious that our intellect is not to be trusted. Think of the interminable series of blunders of which your life is the record! How poorly you have misjudged people and circumstances! How your reason has fooled you many times and again! How many illusions and delusions you have lived through! With what sad clearness you now see your former stupidities, and with what blindness you fail to see your present ones! Looking about you, you find others equally as gifted as yourself holding your opinions as loathsome. Looking above you, you see the most intellectual and the most educated diametrically opposed in their opinions of God, man, and nature. Two great men, two brothers, learned and trained in dialectic and logic, soon grow apart. One becomes a cardinal of the Romish Church, accepting papal infallibility and a thousand such absurdities, the other as firmly convinced that the fallacies of the English Church are God's gospel. Looking below you, you see the great mass of men wrecking their minds and lives upon a thousand outrageous beliefs and prejudices. There is no sadder spectacle in the world than this that the people love error. But each one with imperturbable conceit is convinced that he sees better and plainer than another. Every partisan, democrat or republican, has no sort of doubt that he is right about every financial or governmental measure, though he has never studied finance, history, or political economy five minutes. He does not dream that he is a dupe of the lousy politicians and of his own *lack* of intellect. All history is a tangle of such poverty-stricken intellection. One can but be amazed at the proneness of everybody to see things and do things every way but the right way. And this is the kind of a mental equipment you would stamp with the seal of eternity!

Possibly you may protest that it is a more perfect and purified intellect that you wish. Ah, yes! but that would not be your intellect. You want to be made over, made into another person. That would not be your immortality but that of another. That would imply that it is pure intellect and perfect, in the abstract, that you are interested in. Have you shown much interest in that sort of intellect in the past? If you wish such an immortality of a perfected intellect you must certainly possess it before it can be made everlasting.

Perhaps, again, you will say that it is the ever-progressive, ever-growing intellect you desire. This is subterfuge. That is not what you wish but what you would take in default of your first choice. Lessing said

that if God held out to him absolute truth in one hand and in the other the everlasting search for truth, he would choose the latter. But the condition of everlasting search would be the condition of everlasting imperfection of intellect. Lessing's choice seems to me impious.

I therefore conclude, that at heart you do not wish to eternalise your crude, imperfect intellect, and that the sole method of getting an exalted and perfected intellect is to cultivate it here and now. Have you in the past obeyed reason and not passion or self-interest? Have you studied logic, history, and science with a sincere desire to do your political and social duty, and to free yourself from prejudice, error, superstition, and conceit? If not, why should God suddenly endow you with a perfect intellect ready-made? Is it God's way in this world, to give excellencies unasked and unearned? Rest assured he will not do it at your dying hour. It is no particular merit in you to die; why should you be rewarded with a new intellect then?—From "*The Monist*" (Chicago).

(To be concluded.)

ACID DROPS.

Dr. Momerie is catching it. His uncle—not the pawnbroker, but an actual relative—writes him an open letter, which appears in one religious journal, and perhaps in others. Uncle Williams tells his sceptical nephew that he has not only spoiled his prospects in the Church, but cut himself off "from the fellowship of religiously inclined people of all Churches." Dr. Momerie is also twitted with forsaking and mocking the religion he was trained in. Think of your sainted mother, says Uncle Williams, and "see if you can go on with your flippant and profane talk about the God of Creation and Providence, your father's and your mother's God." Poor Dr. Momerie! Surely this, if anything, will bring him to his knees.

Ralph, thou hast done a fearful deed
In falling away from thy father's creed!

Uncle Williams gloats over the poverty which Dr. Momerie is likely to encounter. He points out that a living is not to be got by lecturing. "Max O'Rell," he says, "has had large fees in the United States; but then you are nothing like so funny as Max O'Rell; and if he were to announce lectures on anything like 'Ecclesiasticism,' he would soon have the hall to himself." Good old Uncle Williams! How lofty is his admonition! The old gentleman says in effect, though he veils his meaning facetiously—"Damn you, you sceptical scoundrel! Go and starve! Go and hang yourself! I cast you off for ever for the awful crime of thinking for yourself. Adieu! and may God have mercy on your soul. I shan't, anyway."

Dr. Momerie is sneered at by the *Illustrated London News*. His matter is said to be not new—which is the silliest of all the hackneyed objections to criticism—and his manner is said to resemble that of "Robert Ingersoll, an American humorist, whom it is scarcely worth while to imitate." Anyone who did not know Ingersoll would, on reading this, imagine him to be a comic actor or music-hall artiste, instead of the greatest orator of the United States, and one who, according to Mr. Gladstone, "writes with a rare and enviable brilliance."

The clergy have to resort to sensational tricks to fill their gospel-shops. The Rev. Llewellyn H. Davis, of St. Bartholomew's Church, Birmingham, advertised a late Sunday service in the *Mail* in a manner worthy of General Booth or the great Barnum. "Found Dead" was the top line, with the "Inquest" below, and following that, "Open Court, trial, cross-examination, verdict, damnation, reprieve"—not *reprieve*. This is a very pretty bill of fare, and the Rev. Llewellyn Davis is to be congratulated on keeping abreast with the age in which he lives. All we want to know now is, what was the amount of the collection.

On the last Sunday in June the West London Mission (Wesleyan) held an open-air service in Hyde Park. It was like those old Scotch Puritan gatherings you read of in Buckle, where the proceedings lasted all day, and he was the best preacher who talked the longest and sweat the most. It began at ten in the morning and ended at eight in the evening, with two brief intervals for refreshment. Dr. Lunn and Hugh Price Hughes took part in the work, but the hero of

the occasion was Mr. Nix, the gentleman who preaches the gospel at the Epsom races. Mr. Nix says it was a glorious day. He is not able to state how many souls were brought to Jesus, but the collections realised £6, one of "the largest ever made at an English open-air service."

Six pounds does not seem a big collection, if it was made "early and often" for ten hours. We have seen two pounds collected after a single Freethought lecture in the open-air.

A *Methodist Times* interviewer found Mr. Nix a few days after this Hyde Park meeting. Mr. Nix was "in his shirt-sleeves, looking ready to fight the devil again if necessary." But as the Devil is spelt with a small *d*, the interviewer at any rate seems doubtful as to his being a real personality. Anyhow, it is easy enough for Mr. Nix to fight an adversary who never puts in an appearance, and his shirt-sleeves attitude is as good as the drawn sword of Bobadil.

On Monday the report concerning Mr. Spurgeon was that he was much more in need of a day's special prayer than he was the previous week. Prayer it seems is like any other medicine. One dose does not suffice. It must be repeated early and often. God in the parable of the importunate widow (Luke xviii.) is likened to an unjust judge, who will not move until wearied by repeated applications.

The epidemic of miracles in Dordogne is stoutly repudiated by the parish priest of the village. Modern priests have a good deal of common sense in these matters. A lady once went to the Oratory and told a father there that she had seen the two First Persons of the Trinity. He asked her what she had taken, and she said, "A couple of glasses of port wine." "Very well, my good soul," replied the ecclesiastic, "go home and take a third glass, and you will see the Holy Ghost."

A rather good story comes to us from Australia of an English ecclesiastic, lately deceased. He was a justice of the peace, and, presiding one day at a country police-court, he observed that a certain witness, apparently with a view of escaping all risk of perjury, held the Bible in such a fashion that when the oath was administered his lips came in contact with his thumbnail instead of "kissing the book." "Witness," sternly exclaimed the lynx-eyed justiciary, "kiss that book, sir. You may deceive the Almighty, but you cannot deceive me!"

James Johnston, who was hanged in the Ballarat gaol for the murder of his wife and four children, died in the sure and certain hope of rejoining his murdered family. He had no fear of death, and recited religious poetry shortly before his execution. Oh, the blessed consolation of religion!

J. Johnson, the Leicester evangelist, who eloped to Australia with his landlord's wife, has been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for stealing jewellery, which he took with him.

Rev. Rich. Bergmann, charged with assault and battery on a young lady, on being placed in the dock at Pittston, Pennsylvania, began a prayer for deliverance, and assured the remonstrating lawyer that the Lord would see him out of his trouble.

A truly pious condition of things was unveiled in the trial of E. Taplin and I. Owen. Taplin conspired to obtain a divorce from his wife by getting Owen to pretend to commit adultery with her. In company with Mr. Roberts, a scripture reader, he went to surprise them in the act, but on their way they turned aside in the drawing room where they indulged in prayer for protection against the violence of the adulterer. They went up stairs assaulted the wife and pretended to assault the paramour, then prayed again giving thanks for the success of their enterprise. Finally the three pietists slept in the same bed together.

A young lady of Wichita, Kansas, named Helen Fields, has given birth to a child whose father, she avers, is the Holy Ghost. That personage is too old and too nebulous for these exploits nowadays. Mary's tale was all very well, but Helen's comes a thousand years too late.

"Good bye, boys, I hope to meet you in heaven," was the parting speech of Sim Johnson, hanged at Charleston, Virginia.

for assault on a white girl. He had "just received the holy communion," so is safely booked for the company of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and Co. Oh, what must it be to be there!

According to the *Boston Globe*, the three cardinal injunctions of Theosophy are—"1. Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence. 2. Listen only to the voice which is soundless. 3. Look only on that which is invisible alike to the inner and outer sense." By ceaseless meditation upon and sedulous application of these divine precepts one may hope to attain the Dharmakaya body after a course of five million four hundred and ninety-six thousand twelve hundred and two reincarnations.

Colonel Olcott, when in Melbourne, declined to meet Joseph Symes in debate, and is, in consequence, rubbed up slightly the wrong way in an article on "Occultism and Olcottism" in the *Liberator*.

The *South Australian Register* (May 25) reports the case of a lady who left £16,000 to the Church. Her sister-in-law, who is a widow and a pauper, asked for a mite to help her keep the wolf from the door. She did not know the kind of people she had to deal with. The ecclesiastical authorities let her know that they had got the money and meant to stick to the whole of it.

The *Railway Herald* publishes the official report by Major-General Hutchinson to the Board of Trade on the railway accident at Norwood Junction. No reference is made to the driver's praying; in fact, there is not a trace of the "modern miracle" in the whole report. The accident is stated to have been due to the failure of a cast-iron girder. When the engine and tender left the rails "Hargraves was nearly thrown down, but managed to seize hold of the Westinghouse brake regulator and apply the brake with full force." Thus in all the pious nonsense of the "modern miracle" blown to the winds by a scientific examination.

Wheeling devotes a smart leading article to some "Christian cyclists" at Bristol, who appear to dread being contaminated by cyclists who are not orthodox. Our contemporary advises them to get Mr. Stead as president and Mr. Price Hughes as vice-president, and to cycle their way to 'the paradise reserved for superior persons."

The Bishop of Worcester says he wants eighty more clergymen in his diocese. It is pitiable and heartrending, observes he, to think of parishes insufficiently provided with pilots to glory. So he sends round the hat for subscriptions. Suppose he and the other well-paid dignitaries of his diocese were to try living on the income of Jesus Christ for a year. That would leave more than sufficient funds for the additional clergy.

A strong disintegration of Christianity is going on in the United States. Even the Presbyterian thunder, which was once dreadful, is losing its terror. The Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, of New York, says that if Presbyterianism can only vituperate scholars and critics, it had better die, and "the sooner it gives up the ghost the better, for it will economise medical expenses and save watchers." If a man says that Leviticus xi, 5, is wrong, as conies don't chew the cud, Dr. Parkhurst says it is no use railing at him; what you've got to do is to "produce a cud-chewing coney."

Booth is an adept in the art of advertising, and the Salvationist Show at the Crystal Palace on Tuesday doubtless served its turn. Booth compares the progress of the Army with that of Methodism, much to the disadvantage of the latter. He puts the following little sum: "If a religious organisation which, after having only 374 ministers in fifty years, grew to have thirty thousand in one hundred years, how many would a religious organisation have in one hundred years which had 10,449 in twenty-six years?" This looks plausible. But Booth should reflect that if progress kept on at an arithmetical rate, the world ought to have been entirely Christianised over a thousand years ago. The truth is, every system gathers up a certain number of persons to whom it is adapted, and when it has exhausted these it comes to the end of its tether. The rapidity with which it does this is no measure of its permanent increase, but often only a sign that the increase will soon stop. No doubt Salvationism is livelier and better adapted to a certain class than the old humdrum

religionism. But that class is a limited though a large one, and the recruits to the S.A. are really taken from those who would otherwise patronise a less noisy form of superstition.

Miss Eva Booth, a daughter of the General, went in person to expostulate with the Mayor [of Eastbourne], who was the prime mover in the prosecutions. Having exhausted her arguments, she fell upon her knees and then and there in the Mayor's parlor prayed that a new heart might be vouchsafed to his worship. But Miss Booth was not to be allowed to occupy the field of prayer by herself. She had counted without her host, who is a Scotchman and a devout, God-fearing man. He readily assented to Miss Booth's request that she might be allowed to pray. But he had no intention of letting her pray alone. He also fell upon his knees and prayed, with a fervency equalling Miss Booth's own, that a new heart might be vouchsafed to the "lawbreakers"! The "knee-drill" thus ended in a drawn battle.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

We saw a provincial newspaper the other day containing a long letter from a mad parson on the fulfilment of prophecy in the return of the Jews to Palestine. Of course, they are not returning in any proper sense of the word, but some of the poor Jews expelled from Russia go there as nearer than Europe. This influx is at the rate of 200 or 300 families per week, and the result is that not only are provisions made dear, but typhus and scarletina are breaking out, and a pestilence is apprehended. Surely it is a libel on Jehovah to allege that he is bringing his people "home" in this disreputable fashion.

M. E. Naville has added his name to the long list of those who have pretended to tell the route the Jews took from Egypt to Palestine when they occupied forty years in journeying about as many miles. The funny thing is, he thinks his version must be correct because it is the shorter route. In a paper read before the old fogeys of the Victoria Institute, he ventured to point to the exact spot where the Jews crossed the Red Sea and the Egyptians were drowned. M. Naville makes it no miracle, only a shifting of the wind. He says: "It has often been noticed by travellers in Egypt that, under the influence of a strong wind, the sea recedes sometimes for a great distance, and comes back again to its former bed when the wind ceases or changes its direction." If this was all, why need God instruct Moses to stretch out his magic rod?

The *Christian World* glowingly reports "the great Evangelical festival at Mildmay Park." It is a sort of annual religious bean-feast, which attracts about three thousand pilgrims, who spend days in singing hymns, praying, and listening to pious addresses. These pilgrims are not workmen; most of them belong to the idle classes, the well-paid professions, or government offices where the work is light and the salary heavy. Our contemporary, indeed admits as much. "The comfortable well-to-do air characteristic of Mildmay audiences," it says, "was as observable as ever. In fact, so far as outward appearances enabled one to judge, there was not one poor person present." Evidently things have changed since Jesus Christ had to make food out of nothing to provision his audiences.

According to the *Christian Life* there is no longer any doubt that Paley was a Unitarian. A gentleman at "one of the universities" (not very precise!) has been studying the notes prepared by Paley for his divinity lectures at Cambridge, and these notes make it absolutely clear that the Archdeacon did not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. This is very interesting, but hardly conclusive; although, for our part, we have always felt that Paley had much less faith in orthodox Christianity than is actually expressed in his writings.

Dr. Dallinger, microscopist and Wesleyan, has been lecturing at Sheffield on spiders—not commercial ones, as you might fancy, considering the locality, but natural spiders. The lecturer stood up for them; they were a much-misrepresented body—although they are less remarkable for body than legs. They display great ingenuity. Of course they do. Ask the flies. But Dr. Dallinger isn't a fly. He stands with his mouth open before spiders. When he sees "such sublime evidences of wisdom coming out in these minute creatures" he is "convinced that wisdom was first

put in." Very likely. But how? Was it put in with a spoon? We pause for a reply.

Miss Muriel Dowie, whose book, *A Girl in the Carpathians*, is such a brilliant success, speaks very plainly on the religion of those parts. She says that the immorality of the Ruthenian peasants is "blind, unrepentant, wholesale," and is not checked by the priests. The Black Army spend their time in a more business-like way. They "practise very considerably upon the ignorance and the really engaging superstition of their flock. They wring money, food and horses, or whatever can change hands, from some bereaved husband, by delivering ingenious messages from his wife in purgatory, and so on." As for the United Greek Church, Miss Dowie says it has all "the good, easy, comfortable points" of Catholicism and Protestantism. It has "a calendar full of pleasantly venal saints, who meet the sinner halfway, and encourage him to feel that there's a sort of chance after all."

A celebrated revivalist named John Paul, who had been awakening the northern districts of England with his preaching, was returning one evening across some fields. A rude fellow passing him pushed him off the pathway rather roughly. "You should not be so rough, my man," said the rev. gentleman. "I would have you know I'm the Rev. Mr. Paul, and have come amongst you folks to awaken within you," etc. Before he had finished his speech the man, who had eyed him with profound astonishment, broke in, "So you're Paul, are you? Well, now, tell us, did you ever get an answer to that long letter you wrote to the Corinthians?"

The annual report of the Swedenborg Society shows—though of course unintentionally—how the Blasphemy Laws cripple Freethought. This Society's subscriptions and dividends for the year amount to £707 18s. 6d., so that the current income is partly made up by interest on investments. But this is not all. The sum of £700 has been received during the year from legacies. This is another illustration of the truth that all Christian bodies are largely dependent on dead men's money. Yet the Christians will not let Secularism profit in this way.

Those of our readers who have seen the editorial notes on Mr. Foote and the National Secular Society in the *Jarrow Guardian* will look in vain for any further reply from "the high priest of Secularism." Mr. Foote prefers the insertion of a brief letter from himself to such representations or misrepresentations of it as may be included in a half-column of editorial paragraphs, and it is a waste of time to try to set right a person who is bent on going wrong. Had the *Jarrow Guardian* taken the slightest trouble to inform itself before rushing into print, it would have found that the circular inviting subscriptions to the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall was only addressed to Freethinkers, and that the Memorial itself was referred to as an institution for the maintenance and propagation of those principles which were the inspiration of Mr. Bradlaugh's life. It only remains to be added that advice from Christians to Freethinkers about the management of their own business lies under a natural suspicion. Napoleon and Wellington did not offer each other advice at Waterloo, but Christians are always tendering advice to their Secular adversaries, who are never foolish enough to accept it.

A parliamentary return has been issued on the motion of Mr. Summers, who asked for a list of the voluntary schools which have no income from subscriptions, but the cost of which is entirely borne by the State and the parents. It appears there are 557 such schools, 226 of which belong to the Church of England. In addition, there are 644 with endowments, so that altogether there are already 1,201 schools whose managers pay absolutely nothing for their privilege of exclusive and denominational management.

At a meeting of the London School Board Head Teachers' Association, Mr. Prior stated that the voluntary school teachers of the country "groaned under the tyranny of the parson, who in most cases was practically the only manager."

"Evidence has been adduced," says the *Catholic Standard* (America), "showing that he died from strangulation; some believing that, Judas-like, he hanged himself, driven to despair by the tortures of remorse and a guilty conscience; others that he was strangled by the direct action of the Devil." The "he" referred to is Martin Luther. The

passage shows the lying bigotry of the Romish Church. It also shows that Church's folly. Fancy the Devil strangling his own agent who was doing his work so splendidly!

Emperor William of Germany "worshipped" at Windsor on Sunday, and the *Daily News* put on a gushing reporter to describe the affair. The sermon was preached by Parson Robins. This man of God besought all the fighting men who listened to him to "bring their lives into harmony with the Savior's example." He cited the cases of Moltke and Nelson, who were very devout, and always looked to the Lord for assistance—in inflicting a bloody defeat on another branch of his family. It would puzzle Parson Robins to square his preaching with the Sermon on the Mount. But what does that matter? All the clergy want, in the main, is to let the world wag in its good old style, so long as all those who fly in the face of Jesus Christ make a public profession of Christianity, and maintain, or get or make other people maintain, the Lord's ministers in a state of affluence, or at least of highly respectable comfort.

Parson Robins wound up by reminding his fighting congregation of "the Last Great Parade of the Army of the Ransomed, when they would march past the saluting point in heaven, doing homage to the King of Kings." No doubt this will be a very pretty sight—for those who see it. Of course the Prince of Wales will be there, for God Almighty will never damn a gentleman of quality; but if there is any tedious delay in the holy procession, Albert Edward will probably fetch out his counters and suggest a game of baccarat.

Among the week's chronicle of the Lord's doings may be mentioned a tornado in Louisiana, a railway disaster at Salford, a collision in the channel, a church struck by lightning at Buckingham, and the continuance of the influenza epidemic in Spain.

Astrologers, necromancers, and spiritualists met in solemn conclave at the Athenæum, Tottenham-court-road, London, for the purpose of petitioning Parliament against the odious laws which oppress them. They parted, however, without doing anything. Each section of the bubbling craft was dead against every other section. Spiritualists denounced astrologers, astrologers denounced spiritualists, and both were denounced by the necromancers. All it required to perfect the Babel was a deputation of Theosophists, but it appears that they do not mix with the common herd of occult performers.

"Mrs. Besant," says the *Echo*, "deplored at the Hall of Science that the abandonment of religious dogma was not always followed by a high standard of morality and sense of duty." We presume this is not a fair account of Mrs. Besant's remarks, but we must expect orthodox writers to make the most of Mrs. Besant's direct or indirect reflections on the party in which she was so lately a leader.

Is it necessary to add that the acceptance of religious dogma is not always followed by a high standard of morality and sense of duty? It appears to us that the observation which the *Echo* parades is not a very wise one. No one asserts that directly a man becomes a Freethinker he puts on all the cardinal virtues, but he certainly wears them as often as his orthodox neighbors.

'CUTELY CONSCIENTIOUS.

SCENE 1.—AT BOOKING-OFFICE WINDOW.

Booking Clerk: "But pardon me, sir. Is not the young lady over twelve?" Revd. Uncoguid: "Oh dear no! She is not ten yet." (Receives half ticket for his daughter.)

SCENE 2.—IN THE TRAIN.

Miss Uncoguid: "Oh, papa, you say you never tell lies. And you know very well I am thirteen." Revd. Uncoguid: "You are thirteen years of age, my dear, certainly, and heaven forbid that I should deny it! But the clerk said nothing about age, so I took his question as meaning—were you over twelve stone in weight, and answered accordingly. No, no, my pet, I would not tell a lie at any cost!"

The Finsbury Park Branch is having a successful summer season and preparing for a heavy autumn and winter campaign. A full meeting of members for important business is requested for Thursday, at 8.30, at 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-Road, Finsbury Park.

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.

R. REED.—Our tracts, which you will see advertised on another page, are sold at sixpence per hundred. You had better order a hundred assorted, and then order more of the ones you think most suitable for distribution in your district. We are delighted to see Freethought extending to Cornwall.

G. F. LAYCOCK.—All these communications from the "spirit-world" are poor stuff. They simply convey the wisdom of the medium, which is never a great quantity. Theodore Parker never talked such rot as this which Fred Willis puts into his mouth—or whatever the spirits discourse with. The publication of it in pamphlet form shows what a number of fools there are to patronise charlatany.

AN ADMIRER writes:—"I attended Dr. Momerie's lecture at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly on Saturday, and paid half a guinea for admission. He demolished the whole of the teachings of Christianity, and spoke of the Resurrection, Ascension, etc., as mythical. He emphatically stated that no more wicked being than the God of the Bible could be conceived. Now I have often heard you express yourself in the same way, but for your lectures, which I consider were more eloquent, I only paid sixpence." This correspondent advises Mr. Foote to give some Freethought lectures in the West-end and charge for admission like Dr. Momerie. It is probable, however, that the novelty of Dr. Momerie's position is the chief attraction to his present audiences, which may dwindle away when the novelty is worn off.

A. WHEELER.—The date is booked.

A. LORD.—Communications for the *Freethinker* must be sent to the editor, not to Mr. Jones. Of course we did not suppose the omission was meant to give us trouble. London is a very big place.

W. R. AND P. L.—What men like Tarry say is of little importance. He is really a Freethought advocate, though he stands on the Christian side, as you appear to have found. We shall be glad to hear that every one of his lectures induces two persons to join the National Secular Society.

R. O. SMITH, hon. treasurer, London Secular Federation, acknowledges the following:—W. Gregory, £1; Balls Pond Branch (collection), 4s. 6d.

C. B. BROGDEN.—Thanks for the card. You mistook the facetiousness. We were quite aware of the fact.

P. FERDINANDO.—(1) We do not know of any Life of John Morley. There was a very good sketch of him in the *Radical Leader* three years ago. Perhaps Mr. Forder could get you a copy. (2) John Morley took up a false position at first over Mr. Foote's imprisonment. As editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* he sided with the bigots. But he recovered himself afterwards, and denounced Mr. Foote's sentence as "scandalous." See Mr. Foote's *Prisoner for Blasphemy*.

T. BARNETT.—Thanks for paper. The rhymes have appeared before.

JAMES BREVITT.—"The great synagogue" is said to have extended from the time of Ezra B.C. 478. to that of Simon the Just, who is said to have completed the canon, and who according to Eusebius died B.C. 292. Probably most of the books of the Old Testament were collected and compiled during this period, though some did not find their way into the canon till the time of Herod the Great.

UNSECTARIAN.—Always glad to receive papers and cuttings. You are right in saying that we have an up-hill fight, but we like a stiff contest, and delight in overcoming difficulties.

J. G. FISHER.—Pleased to learn the Leeds excursion was a success. Mr. Judge is a very capable man. We never expect to hear him praised too highly.

W. HOLLAND.—Wait a bit. All in good time. Thanks for cuttings.

R. FENWICK.—Mr. Touzeau Parris still lectures occasionally. He lately rejoined the N. S. S. He is a man of high ability and wide information.

S. G. MIDDLETON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. DORG.—Glad to hear that Mr. Watts looked in robust health. We hope to see him soon in London. Of course it is hardly the time of the year for crowded audiences. The date is booked.

H. SMITH.—See paragraph.

J. R. WILLOCK.—You have done quite right. Mr. Foote is always pleased to hear from the Branch secretaries, and to be of any possible assistance to them.

J. G. BARTRAM.—We hope the Newcastle Branch will flourish under your secretaryship. Mr. Foote will give you a date as early as possible.

N. ASHWORTH (Blackburn).—We note your change of address to 3 Florence-street. We are glad to hear that the Blackburn Branch intends to be more active. No doubt good is done by circulating our literature, but that is not sufficient. Meetings are indispensable.

B. INGHAM.—The Marquis of Queensberry cannot "take his seat" in the House of Lords. The Scotch peers who sit there are elected by the whole Scotch peerage, and without election there is no claim to a seat in the upper chamber.

W. WHEELER.—Thanks. See paragraph.

HUTTY AND JOHNS, 225 Shields-road, Byker, supply Freethought publications. Friends in that part of the Tyneside district will please note.

R. ROSETTI.—No doubt it is annoying to hear a Christian Evidence lecturer state in public, as the man Taylor did, that you applied to Mr. George Wise for employment as a lecturer on their platform. But you should remember that most of these persons are known to be unscrupulous liars, and they will act according to their nature. Whether Mr. Wise will contradict the slander is more than we can prophesy.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschenthum—Echo—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Better Way Jarrow Guardian—Newcastle Daily Leader—Spennymoor and Tudhoe Chronicle—Modern Thought—Kent Messenger—Bible Temperance Educator—Sunday School Chronicle—Universe—North Star—Christian World—Wheeling—Independent Pulpit—Church Reformer.

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 volume in reply to Mr. Gladstone is now on sale; that is, the copies in paper covers are. The cloth copies will not be ready till next week. Had it been known that Mr. Gladstone was going to lose his eldest son, this polemic against him might have been held back for a while. But Freethinkers have not the gift of prophecy:

Great care has been taken with this reply to Mr. Gladstone. He is followed point by point, and all his arguments are fairly met. It remains to be seen, however, if the public press, or even the religious journals, will condescend to notice a work by the President of the National Secular Society. Copies are sent for review, but we expect the old conspiracy of silence will be maintained.

Now's the day and now's the hour. At least it will be this morning (Sunday, July 12) at 9.30. Then the London Secular Federation's chartered steamboat will paddle away from Old Swan Pier, London Bridge, taking a cargo of Sabbath-breakers, priest-defiers, parson-scorers, and graduates for Hades, up the river Thames to Kew and Hampton. The boat is to call at Westminster, Battersea Park, Chelsea, and Hammersmith. Then she will steam on to her destination, loaded with what the clergy would no doubt consider the vilest freight on record. Let us hope she will swim "till the last galoot's ashore."

These are the times of leaving. London Bridge, 9.30; Westminster, 9.45; Battersea Park, 10; Chelsea, 10.5; Hammersmith, 10.40. This is reckoned sufficient to take up all passengers. One or two have asked if the boat couldn't call at their front door, and they would get ready when the captain rang the bell. But the Company say this would be inconvenient, so the excursionists must go to the above piers or stay at home.

As we said before, the excursionists will have to provision themselves this year. On board the steamer there will be an official commissariat, and on shore the "saints" must descend upon the "tea and shrimps" establishments, or whatever shops they fancy. Announcement will be made on board as to a trysting-place for an open-air meeting—admission free, and no collection.

The boat returns from Hampton at 5.30, from Kew at 6.30. This will allow every excursionist to get home at a reasonable hour.

There has been a great run on the tickets. Mr. Pownceby has had to collect unsold tickets from the Branches that had any, and deposit them with Mr. Forder at 28 Stonecutter-street. That is the only place where they can now be obtained, if at all. It must be borne in mind that no tickets can possibly be obtained on the boat or at the pier. Any person who comes on speculation will simply be disappointed.

More than a forty thousand parson-power of prayer has been employed to render the L. S. F. excursion to Hampton Court all that is pleasurable. If the Lord does not give us good weather, we shall never trust him any more.

Mr. Charles Watts has arrived in England. His address for letters is 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London, E.C. Mr. Watts lectured three times at Liverpool on Sunday to enthusiastic audiences.

Mr. W. Heaford has changed his address to 16 Lavender-terrace, Clapham Junction. Secretaries of Branches will please note.

Mr. Heaford goes on a lecturing tour during the second half of August. His booked dates are—Aug. 16, Manchester; 23, Sheffield; 25, Grimsby; 30, Hull. Other places—such as Leeds, Bradford, and Huddersfield—should avail themselves of Mr. Heaford's services. He is quite willing to lecture in the open-air, and no doubt the Organisation Committee would entertain any reasonable application for pecuniary assistance.

The same observations apply to Mr. A. B. Moss, who is willing to spend his annual holiday in a similar way. Mr. Moss's tour would be from July 25 to August 10. He is anxious to take the Newcastle district first; then Liverpool, Manchester, and other South Lancashire towns; and finally, if possible, Belfast, and even Dublin. Will the Branches in those localities write to Mr. Moss at once? Like Mr. Heaford, he is willing to lecture out of doors. This will lessen the expenses considerably.

The Westminster Branch held its half-yearly meeting on Sunday. The secretary presented a favorable report, and the old officers were re-elected.

At the great annual gala of the Durham Miners' Association the first resolution passed at each of the platforms was an expression of deep sorrow with the bereaved of Charles Bradlaugh and of the great loss sustained by his death. The portrait of our late leader appeared on the new silk banners displayed on the occasion.

Mrs. Thornton Smith lectured at Manchester on Sunday, and had a good reception. Her evening audience was an improvement on previous visits. To-day (July 12) the Secular Hall will be closed for decoration. When it is reopened the Branch believes it will have the handsomest Secular Hall in England. The bust of Mr. Bradlaugh is to be removed, and in its place will be put a full-length oil painting.

While the hall is closed the Manchester Branch will not be idle. Mr. Jones, its energetic chairman of the outdoor meetings, is starting a new station near the Local Board offices at Gorton. Operations begin to-day (July 12) at 11, and the local Freethinkers should rally round the platform.

On Sunday evening the South Shields Branch did a good thing. It held an open-air meeting in the Market-place. Mr. Peacock acted as chairman, and Mr. Dipper spoke on "Moral Reasons for Rejecting Christianity." There was a good deal of noisy opposition, but the Secularists held their ground, and some of the lady members were active in distributing Freethought tracts and papers. We hope the Branch will continue these meetings.

At the annual meeting of the Newcastle Branch, Mr. J. G. Bartram was elected secretary. His address is 29 Byker-street. The Branch is in an improved condition financially, and useful members are joining every week. Outdoor propaganda has been started on the Town Moor. To-day (July 12) Mr. Dipper commences a course of lectures on the

Quayside. All that is wanted now is a more regular attendance of members and a more punctual payment of subscriptions.

A very enjoyable, and we hope useful, excursion of the Leeds Branch took place last Sunday (July 5). Two capacious waggons, well filled with grown and juvenile members and their relatives and friends, attended by a light escort of cyclists, drove to Harrogate, by way of Wetherby and Knaresbro', returning in the evening through Harewood. On Harrogate Stray, separated by a suitable space from the noisier Salvationists, Mr. Fisher and Mr. Judge, assisted by Mr. Blakey, of the Starbeck Branch, upheld the cause of reason against superstition. The local Christians were somewhat lacking in orderliness, but the meeting was a large one, and some good must have been done. The management of the party was chiefly in the hands of Mr. Judge, who deserves the highest credit.

Mr. Wheeler's recent article on Bible Lies is translated into French from our columns, and appears in *La Verité Philosophique*.

The *Spennymoor Chronicle* inserts an excellent letter on Science and the Bible from Mr. T. Phillips, in reply to a Christian signing himself "Socratis."

We have received the annual report of the Bombay Branch of the National Secular Society. We believe it will interest our readers, and we shall publish it in full in our next issue.

The *Liberator* of Melbourne has now entered on its eighth year under the editorship of Mr. Symes. It retains its old character of being independent, thorough-going, and outspoken in its utterances. Mr. Symes knows the foe and is fearless in his attacks. We trust his paper has a long and successful career before it.

Bunjin Nanjio, a learned Buddhist from Japan, says Max Müller, regards prayer as sinful and almost blasphemous. He says, if we really believe in a higher wisdom and power than our own, it is an insult to put our own notions forward, and try to interfere with the working of that higher power. You may adore and meditate, he said, you may even trust and submit, but you must never ask, not even of Buddha, though he is full of pity and compassion.

When Max Müller observed that we must believe in a maker of the world, Bunjin Nanjio demurred. He said Buddha had dismissed such inquiries as fruitless. And how, he added, if you believe in an all-powerful, all-wise, all-loving Creator, can you ascribe to him so imperfect a piece of workmanship as this earth, and hold him responsible for all its suffering, disease and crime. B. Nanjio is a Buddhist, but he is no fool.

A controversy on the alleged modern miracle has been going on in the *Scarborough Mercury*, in which pronounced Freethought views have been ventilated by "A Heretic," "Jno," "Anxious Inquirer," and others.

Walt Whitman is putting out a new volume of prose and verse with the title, "Good bye, my Fancy."

Macmillan for July in "The Story of a False Prophet," gives the history of the Messianic impostor, Sabbathai Zevi, who appeared in the year 1666, a year that was looked forward to as a wonderful one by Christians and Jews alike. He had a large following among Turkish and Palestinian Jews, many of whom continued to believe in him even after he saved his life by turning a Mohammedan. The story is instructive as to the lengths to which fanaticism and credulity will go.

A new edition (the third) of Mr. Foote's *Was Jesus Insane?* is now ready. It is printed in large type on good paper, making sixteen pages for one penny. This edition contains a fresh note of some length on Ernest Havet's criticism of Jules Sorey's theory of the insanity of Jesus.

In taking steps toward the perfection of man, writes Edgar Fawcett to the *New York Herald*, "coming generations have many fallacies to forget. For example, mentioning two or three of these fallacies quite at random, I should say that our

descendants must cease to connect morality with religion; that they must cease to regard the worship of an unknown, unseen, and unimaginable deity as in the least way important to the human race; that they must strip national separativeness entirely from the problem of coming civilisation; that they must cultivate the clear seen requirements of a common language; that they must realise the individual odium shadowing each member of society who stores wealth merely to have it said of him that he possesses more than is needful to his ordinary comforts, for in this bloodless and altruistic way I believe can the terrible differences of classes alone be settled."

Mr. Foote's article, "A Real Miracle," is reprinted from the *Freethinker* in Dr. Monroe's *Ironclad Age*.

The late W. R. Greg's thoughtful work on *The Enigmas of Life* has reached its eighteenth edition, which now appears edited by his wife, and with an interesting prefatory memoir.

This is a good time of the year for circulating our "Freethinker Tracts." They are very cheap, and we know they have been very useful. Secularists who move about freely in this fine weather (when it is fine, you know) should provide themselves with a packet of these Tracts and drop one here and there in likely quarters. As everyone contains (at the bottom) an advertisement of the *Freethinker*, the friends who distribute them are helping to promote our circulation. It is only this which enables us to issue the Tracts so cheaply.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING held at Hall of Science on Thursday, July 2, the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair.—The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, and final arrangements for the excursion discussed.—Mr. A. Guest (Ball's Pond) proposed and Miss Vance seconded—"That this Council convey to the Peace Congress, when assembled in Rome in November next, its thorough sympathy with the efforts of the Congress to establish some more humanitarian means of settling international disputes than recourse to war; with the intimation also that this expression of sympathy fairly embodies the general feeling of English Freethinkers." The resolution was carried unanimously.—A report was presented as to the work at Midland Arches; and the Open-air Committee reported grants made to Branches since last meeting.—After some discussion on the lecture list, Mr. Moss spoke in reference to the method of conducting lecture stations, and, at the suggestion of the President, gave notice that he would bring the matter more fully before the Council at its September meeting. Miss Vance, Messrs. Rutt, Harper, and others took part in the discussion.—The action to be taken by the Federation at the next School Board election was then considered. Mr. Foote spoke as to the Tract on Secular Education prepared by Mr. J. M. Wheeler and himself, and offered to print 20,000 copies for distribution by the Branches. This offer was accepted with thanks.—The matter of collections by Branches in aid of the funds of the Federation was discussed, and it was urged that these collections should be made as soon as convenient.—The Council then adjourned.—
EDMUND POWNCEBY, Sec.

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THE CHRISTIAN CROSS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

As I definitely insist that the Christian cross was at first astro-theological, as I stated in my last letter, inserted in your paper on June 14, I think a little more evidence will be acceptable to the readers of the *Freethinker*, which I think is now the real representative of the Secular party in England; and I can assure you that I am glad to see my name beside yours and Mr. Wheeler's in the cause of exploding the great religious sham or fraud that we have been suffering under so long.

Mr. J. B. Mitchell, in his essay on Chrestos, tells us "That the researches of De Rossi, Le Blanc and others have made it certain that the monogram composed of the X (chi) and P (rho) preceded every purely crucial emblem." The rho, or circle, was the heavenly circle, and sometimes put round the chi. In the Vatican at Rome they have ancient Greek and Roman coins with Hercules and Jupiter upon them, and on the reverse side, on the outer circle, the whole zodiac or heavenly circle, and in the inner or middle circle the representation of the four seasons or elements. In my last letter I mentioned the Achaian coins which are given in the *Numismatic Chronicle* (vol. 4) for 1864. There are five, and they are given as coins of the Achaian League between B.C. 280 and B.C. 191. The writer says "they are not rare"—that is, not scarce—and he calls the chi cross, which is on them all, "the monogram of the Achaian League," which it may have been, or it may not, as Britannia sitting upon the celestial circle or sphere represents England on our copper coins of today. Now on these Achaian (Greek) coins are the A and O, or alpha and omega, which is found with the early Christian crosses. Also the fish is found upon them as with the early Christians. On these Greek coins are also found Posidon's trident—which Britannia holds in her hand upon our coins—Zeus's thunderbolt, and the two bonnets of Castor and Pollux; and several of the cabalistical letters or figures which culminated into the vowels of the Greek and Latin alphabets. And more than this, they all five have the head of Zeus, and, as if there was not evidence enough in the above, I find upon one of them the word "epinikos" in Greek capitals. This word would mean, at the time when these coins were made, "Depend upon me to conquer." Here is the origin of the Latin, "In hoc vincis," or "By this conquer." There may have been some truth in Constantine the Great being assisted by some priest or astrological augur to see this conquering cross in the heavens when we understand its allegorical meaning. On some of the crosses given in Didron's "Christian Iconography" there is the word *nikos*, which Didron says meant "conquer"; but they are there preceded by the letters "I C" and "X C," which, we are there told, represented "Jesus Christ conqueror." In an essay on the Cross, published by Hunter, Rose and Co., Toronto, 1879, we are told "That about the year A.D. 400 the X (chi) was changed into the heathen T (tau), and the monogram was altered, the X (chi) being withdrawn and a crossbar added instead of the (rho) P." I think the coins that I have introduced from the *Numismatic Chronicle* above, one of them having the word *epinikos*, and all having the X (chi), are the best connecting link I have seen between Christianity and the preceding Pagan religion.
R. SHAW.

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The *Christian World* writes on "The coming Theology." We thought it came 1891 years ago.

A LOCAL MISSIONARY LAY.
(From a Japan paper).

When I was a good little hobbledy-hoy
And pennies came in very chary,
I was taught to believe that the acmé of joy
Was to give to the poor missionary,
Who had so few pennies,
Was sans croquet and tennis,
And who lived all his life
With a savage's knife,
Like Damocles' sword, for ever impending,
A cruel and tragical *destin* portending.

Whenever they brought round the silver church plate
And I tearfully dropped in my coppers,
I trembled to think of the holy man's fate,—
Assegais, javelins, tomahawks, choppers,
And a cannibal kitchen
Where his flesh they would pitch in
To saucepan or cauldron to cook it;—
I was innocent then, and I took it
For real Gospel fact
That heathens all act
Like South Sea Isle man-eating sinners,
And give frequent roast missionite dinners.

And once I attended a dear little church,
And heard an address most pathetic,
From a prelate who looked in his dignified perch
(The pulpit) divinely ascetic.
The bishop was grieving
Because he was leaving
His family, friends, and his nation
To carry the words of salvation
To some poor dusky creatures
Who wanted more preachers
In a certain fair isle
Where man only is vile.
But after a season,
No doubt, with good reason,
The prelate gave proof of his sanctification
By piously writing his own resignation,
Then homeward returning.
At present he's earning
A pittance enough for a reverend man
By acting as somebody's suffragan.

But as time passes on, and as innocence flees,
Childish notions are fast dissipated,
And so the time came when I sailed o'er the seas
And to heathenish climes emigrated.
Now I look with derision
On each baseless vision
And childish misgiving
For priests who are living
And who ply their profession
In a foreign concession.
For they've plenty of pennies,
And croquet and tennis,
And chaises and horses,
And very few "crosses,"

And truly they all seem to have heaps of leisure
To vary their arduous duties with pleasure.

At times, it is true, they indulge in a *melée*
On the question of wine or no wine in their jelly;
But this, I should think, cannot be quite so thrilling
As the problem, "which of us is most fit for killing?"
When a cannibal host in another locality
Is bent on display of true hospitality,
And makes up his mind that his neighbors he'll greet
And give them a prime joir of missionite meat.
And now and then there is a fuss
When they think proper to discuss
A little point of science,
Or the merits of a faience,
Or the view that a barbarian
Takes of some hard knot sectarian.
Since most of these matters must tend to mind-narrowing,
No doubt they are dreadfully wearing and harrowing.

MORAL.

As they've plenty of pennies,
And croquet and tennis,
And fair time for leisure
And taking their pleasure,

And chaises and horses,
And very few crosses,—
Though their uncles and aunts and their cousins they've
quitted,
I really don't think they are much to be pitied;
For we've all done the same,
And I think it's a shame,
That kids' pocket-money should not go to others
More needy than even our missionite brothers.

BENEDICT.

INFIDELITY IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

A lively correspondence has been going on in the columns of the *Sunday School Chronicle*, which purports to be the organ of Sunday School Unions throughout the world, on the subject of Infidelity among Sunday scholars. The ball was opened by a correspondent, "Gleaner," who stated: "I find in the Sunday-school with which I am connected a spirit of infidelity cropping up constantly, especially among the older boys. They associate in the workshop with professed sceptics, and are induced to read the *Freethinker* and other similar periodicals, so that without troubling themselves with the arguments of the other side, or considering whither their rash denials of Bible facts and teaching are likely to lead them, they seem rather to glory in the temerity of their unbelief. The spirit of doubt, denial, and intellectual independence is abroad," says "Gleaner," and he asks how to deal with the problem. Of course the letter produced a host of answers, with suggestion of prayer, anti-infidel literature, not to teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, etc. Some of the more discerning writers see that the introduction of what is called anti-infidel literature is most perilous to the faith of the scholars, since it suggests doubts and arguments which cannot always be successfully refuted. The only safe policy is the conspiracy of silence, and this can no longer be successfully pursued since Freethought is in the air.

PROFANE JOKES.

Mrs. Nagley: "Why do you suppose women were commanded to keep silent in the churches?" Mrs. Nagley: "To give the men a chance in at least one place."

"Tommy, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. I'm sure your Bible doesn't teach you to wait for another boy and throw stones at him." "It does far 's I've got. I'm only in the first part yet."

Sniffles: "We had a fine musical treat at our church last Sunday morning." Smiles: "Is that so?" Sniffles: "Yes. The tenor waited outside for the organist, and then licked him before the whole congregation for spoiling his pet solo by playing a wrong accompaniment."

An old lady in Belleville, Ill., was dying of a lingering illness, and her pastor called upon her to administer religious consolation. After some general conversation the minister brought forth his Bible, and, suggesting that she might feel consoled by hearing a chapter read, asked her what part she would prefer. "Well, I don't much care," was the reply, "but that story about Samson setting fire to the foxes' tails is about as funny as any."

A farmer took his wife to a sacred concert, and after listening with apparent enjoyment, the pair became suddenly interested in one of the grand choruses, "All we like sheep have gone astray." First, a sharp soprano voice exclaimed, "All we like sheep—" Next, a deep voice uttered, in the most earnest tone, "All we like sheep—" Then all the singers at once asserted, "All we like sheep—" "Well, I don't," exclaimed the old Rusticus to his partner; "I like beef and bacon, but I can't bear sheep meat."

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- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, 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.

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): July 12, at 9.50, excursion to Hampton Court from Battersea Park Pier. Monday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8, discussion.
Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "The Gospel of Evolution."
Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "A Page of Forgotten Eastern Philosophy."
West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road (close to Latimer Road Station): Friday, at 8.30, social meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Moral Difficulties of Christianity"; 7.15, Mr. G. Shambrook, "Thou shalt not kill."
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, a Free-thought lecture.
Camberwell—Station Road: 11.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "Religion and Science."
Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh."
Edmonton (corner of Angel Road): 7, Mr. C. Cohen, "The Ethical Aspect of Religion."
Leyton (open space near Vicarage Road, High Road): 11.30, Mr. J. Marshall, "God—a Personification."
Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. W. Norrish, "The Teachings of Jesus Immoral."
North Finchley (opposite "The Swan"): 7, Mr. Sam Standing, "The Bitter Fruits of Christianity."
Tottenham (corner of West Green Road): 3.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "David and Shemei."
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Professor Flint's Anti-Theistic Theories"; 3.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Moral Difficulties of Christianity."
Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "The Wooden Horse of Troy."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: Mr. C. Watts, 11, "The False Claims for the Bible"; 7, "Religion Without Superstition."
Crook—35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law: 6.30, a business meeting, delegate's report from N. E. S. F.
Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Harry Smith, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."
Newcastle-on-Tyne—25 Nelson Street: 7, Debating Society, Mr. Copel Francis, "Different Versions of Life."
Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Pinhorne, "Memories of a Great Battle."
Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road: Members and friends going to Whalley to meet at the hall at 5.45 a.m.
Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street: 3, members' quarterly meeting; 5, tea; 7, musical and other recitals, singing.
South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street: 7, business meeting.
Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 6, Mr. J. Rothery, a reading.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Leeds—Woodhouse Moor (near the band-stand): 6.30, Mr. J. Greevz Fisher, "Why Working People ought Not to go to Church."
Manchester (near Local Board Offices at Gorton): 11, Mr. Jones will lecture. At the corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road: 3, Mr. Thomas Parke, "Old Testament Worthies."
Newcastle—Sandhill, Quayside: 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Creation."
Sneinton Market: 11, Mr. J. Hooper, "What is Christianity?"
Sunderland Raker: Mr. A. T. Dipper, 3, "Jesus Christ and his Teachings"; 7, "Plain Truth about the Bible?"

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—July 12, morning, Woolwich; 19, morning, Westminster; afternoon, Leyton. July 28 to Aug. 9, Holiday Tour. Aug. 16, morning, Battersea; 23, morning, Westminster; 30, morning, Woolwich. Sept. 6, morning, Clerkenwell; 13, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 20, morning, Westminster.
C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—July 12, morning, Pimlico; 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.

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

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