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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"Leave Mammon and Jehovah to those who delight in wickedness and slavery—their altars are stained with blood or polluted with gold, the price of blood. But the shrines of the Penates are good wood fires, or window-frames intertwined with creeping plants; their hymns are the purring of kittens, the hissing of kettles; the long talks over the past and dead, the laugh of children, the warm wind of summer filling the quiet house, and the pelting storm of winter struggling in vain for entrance."
—SHELLEY.

DEAD THEOLOGY: A REPLY TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. II.

In support of the Christian idea of the Unity of Life the Archbishop cites St. Paul, who once asked in a callous way if God cared for oxen. Had the Archbishop appealed to Jesus he would have found the oracle dumb, or something worse; for the Nazarene distinctly told his apostles to preach only to the Jews, and leave the Samaritans and Gentiles in darkness. St. Paul took a flight beyond this narrow patriotism. It was he, and not the personal disciples of Jesus, who broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile. It was he who scorned the idea that Jesus, to use his own language, was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It was he, and not Peter, or James, or John, who said that God had made all nations of one blood; he who declared "ye are all one in Christ." Yet it is easy to make too much of this; for St. Paul did not include the heathen and unbelievers within the fold of brotherhood; and when he asserted the fatherhood of God, he appealed to the previous utterance of a Greek poet, thus conceding his own want of originality.

One might imagine, too, that the old Jewish story of Creation—which in turn was not original—involved the common descent of the human race; and as this idea was almost, if not quite, universal, being based on the obvious generic resemblance of the various races of mankind, it seems a stretch of fancy to put it forward as "a Christian statement" in some way connected with "Jesus of Nazareth."

The Archbishop's second instance of the concurrence of modern progress with the teaching of Jesus, is to say the least of it peculiar. "From the liberty to inquire," he says, "comes the liberty to express the results of inquiry. And this is the preamble of the Charter of Jesus Christ."

We defy Dr. Benson to find a single plain passage about freedom of thought in the teachings of Jesus. The Nazarene was fond of saying, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." But it was reserved for Ingersoll to say "He that hath a brain to think let him think."

The Archbishop goes on to claim Darwin as "our aged Master"—Darwin, who rejected Christianity for forty years of his life. He quotes from Beale the sentence, "Intellectual work of every kind must be free." "And the New Testament," he adds, "is still the one volume of books on religion which accepts this whole statement."

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This is a bold—some would say a brazen—assertion. If the New Testament teaches anything clearly, it teaches that belief is necessary to salvation. That doctrine stifles free speech and extinguishes inquiry. Why investigate if you may be damned for your conclusions? And why allow investigation if another man's errors may involve your perdition? These questions have been answered logically enough by the Christian Church, and "the Charter of Jesus Christ" has been the worst of spiritual oppressions. No religion has been so intolerant as the Christian. Mohammedanism has been far less bigoted. Buddhism has the proud distinction of never having persecuted one human being in twenty-four centuries.

The Archbishop's third instance is fantastic to the point of grotesqueness. Both Christianity and the Spirit of Inquiry, he says, are at one in "the demand for fruit." Does he mean to imply that other religions set their faces against "fruit"? Buddhism is quite imperative about moral duties. Mohammedism gets itself obeyed in matters of conduct, while Christianity is quite ineffectual. Drink, gambling, and prostitution abound in Christian countries; in the Mohammedan world they have been sternly repressed. This is admitted by Dr. Benson in his volume on *Christ and His Times*; admitted, and even emphasised; so that he may, as it were, be confuted out of his own mouth.

If we take a leap to the penultimate sermon in the present volume, we find Archbishop Benson indulging in the same kind of loose statement and inconsequential reasoning. Its title is "Christ's Crucifixion, an All in All." The preacher scorns the Greek notion of the Crucifixion as "the shocking martyrdom of a grand young moralist." Such a notion, he says, is "quite inconsistent with the facts." Either we know not what Christ taught, or else he was more than man. And the Archbishop sets about proving this by means of a series of leaps over logical chasms.

After dilating on the innocence of Christ, who was certainly guilty according to the Mosaic law, and deserving of death according to the express command of Jehovah, the Archbishop writes as follows:—

"Then we look back through our eighteen centuries, and we see that before the age of three-and-thirty he had fashioned sayings, had compacted thoughts, had expressed principles about duty, about the relative worth of things, about life, about love, about intercourse with God, about the formation of character, the relation of classes, the spirit of law, the essence of government, the unity of man, which had not existed, or which were not formulated when He opened His lips, but which have been and are the basis of society from the time they were known till now."

This is a tissue of false assumptions. The sayings, thoughts, and principles of Jesus *did* exist before, and they *were* formulated when he opened his lips. Not one original utterance is ascribed to him in the whole of the Gospels. It is idle to bandy generalisations; let the Archbishop select specimens of Christ's teaching, and we will find parallels to them, sometimes better and more wisely expressed, in the utterances of his predecessors. Nor is it true that Christ's

teachings have been, or are, the basis of society. Society exists in defiance of them. It is never based, and it never will be based, on any abstract teaching. Its basis is *self-interest*, ever increasing in complexity, and ever more and more illuminated by the growth of knowledge.

Take the case of oaths. Jesus said plainly, "Swear not at all." But when earthly potentates wanted their subjects to swear fidelity, the Christian priests discovered that Jesus meant, "Swear only on special occasions." And it was reserved for an Atheist, in the nineteenth century, to pass an Act allowing Christians to obey Jesus Christ.

Take the injunction, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Society could never exist upon such a basis, so the clergy find that Jesus, like Polonius, spoke tropically. Every Christian is busy laying up treasures on earth, and Archbishop Benson is well to the front in the competition.

Having made ridiculous claims for Jesus Christ, the Archbishop proceeds in this wise: "Next ask yourself whether a stainless, loving, sincere, penetrating person like that makes or enlarges on unfounded declarations as to matters of fact. Is it consistent with such a character?" Now Jesus speaks of "the immense importance of his own person," he speaks of "My flesh, My blood" as of vital power, he says "I and my Father are one." Could he have been deceived? Well, why not? Honesty does not guarantee us against error. The best of men have been mistaken. And sincere natures are most liable to be deceived by taking subjective impressions for external realities.

There is another explanation, which the Archbishop is too shrewd to pass over in silence. Perhaps others said those things for Jesus, perhaps they "attributed to him sayings which he did not utter." But this, the Archbishop says, only multiplies the difficulty and the astonishment; for, to put it briefly, his biographers in that case were as good at predicting and inventing as himself. And why not? Do we not know that the story of the woman taken in adultery, which is finely told, and has all along been thought to contain some of Christ's most characteristic teaching, does not exist in the earliest manuscripts? It was invented by an unknown writer. And if one unknown writer could (and did) invent this story, other unknown writers may have invented every part of the Gospel narratives.

The attempt to make Jesus sponsor for himself is the last refuge of hard-driven Christians. The frame of mind it evinces is seen in Dr. Benson's interpretation of the exclamation "I thirst," ascribed to Jesus on the cross. Crucifixion produced an intolerable thirst, and the exclamation is very natural; but Dr. Benson says that Jesus meant "I thirst for souls," and adds that "no man can doubt" it. Such are the shifts to which Christians are reduced when they cling to faith in defiance of reason.

Dr. Benson's "living theology" is dead theology. It is sentimentalism and make-believe. Perfectly scriptural doctrines are cast aside while others are arbitrarily retained. Vague talk about "Christ and him crucified" takes the place of time-honored dogmas, logically deduced from "the Word of God," and stamped with the deliberate approval of councils and synods. Christianity, in short, is becoming a matter of personal taste and preference. The time is approaching when every Christian will have a Christianity of his own.

This is the moral of the Archbishop's volume. Had space permitted we should have liked to notice other features of his sermons. In one place he says that "the so-called Secularist is the man who deprives things secular of all power and meaning and beauty." We think that he deprives Christianity of all meaning, and that being gone its "power" and "beauty" are idle themes of wasted eloquence. G. W. FOOTE.

PEACE SUNDAY.

MODERN Christianity pretends to be a religion of peace and goodwill. The true reading of its text is, however, "peace on earth to men of goodwill." To all others its attitude has ever been that of the other verse, "Those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them bring them hither and slay them before me." For fifteen hundred years it has done worse than nothing in the direction of peace. Now at last, when the influence of the church is declining to zero, it is proposed, at the instance of the Peace Congress, that a Sunday—the third in December, as coming closely before Christmas—shall be instituted as a Peace Sunday to preach and pray in favor of peace. This repentance comes late in the day. At first, when Christians were weak and in a minority, the maxims of non-resistance were on their lips, if not in their lives. But when the sword of power was obtained, it was, as in the case of Peter, who relied not on the power of prayer, but drew his weapon and smote off the ear of Malchus, speedily put to use. It was discovered that war was lawful in a righteous cause, and that cause their own. St. Augustine, the great leader of Christian theology, made this distinction, and discovered that his fellow-Christians the Donatists, whose only heresy was the preference of their own church government to one imposed from without, were the proper objects of a religious war. Christianity has indeed been the cause of more religious wars than any other religion of which we have any account. Its history is one long, red record of strife and bloodshed; only now again, as it is losing power, it reverts to a milder doctrine, and preaches peace at home while its missionaries in China are crying out for war against a nation which inculcated peace and goodwill hundreds of years before Jesus Christ was born.*

Alone among Christians, the Quakers, since the seventeenth century, have stood out in their protest against war. They are still the chief supporters of the Peace Society. I give them all credit for their protest, though I cannot but think they have spoiled their cause by advocating the policy of "peace at any price," when the world instinctively sees that to "resist not evil" is to let evil triumph, and that it is possible to pay too heavy a price even for the blessing of peace. But orthodox Christians have always taught that it is the duty of subjects to obey their rulers, since "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1). The thirty-seventh article of the Church of England declares "it is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars." Church and State have been allied in this as in other matters. In the palmy days of Christianity, Christian ecclesiastics not only commanded wars against their enemies and blessed the banners of their partisans, but actually served in person. Gregory, of Tours, mentions two bishops in the sixth century who had killed many enemies with their own hand; while Erasmus, in the sixteenth century, rebukes the bishops for taking more pride in leading three or four hundred dragoons with swords and guns than in having a following of divinity students. Most have heard the story of the Bishop of Beauvais, who fought with a club instead of a sword, out of respect for the canon which forbade an ecclesiastic to shed blood, and who was taken prisoner by Richard I., after doing much execution with his club. The Pope demanded his release as his own son and son of the church, whereupon Count de Lion sent his prisoner's armor to Rome and asked the Pope if he recognised that as the garb of his son or the son of the church.

* Laotse, in the sixth century B.C., said, "Peace is the aim of the superior man. He who rejoices at the destruction of human life is not fit to be entrusted with power" (Tao teh king, chap. xxxi.).

If Christian ministers wish to promote peace, they should suppress their Bible. Jingo and Jehovah are close akin. The records of God's chosen people ring with war. Jehovah enjoins wars of conquest and extermination. The Jews are commanded to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan and disposes them of the land (Num. xxxiii., 52-53). He gave as his law, "Of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them" (Deut. xx., 16-17). Moses, commanded by God to war against the Midianites, was wroth with his officers for saving all the women, and ordered them, "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him. But all the women children, that hath not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves" (Num. xxxi., 17-18). What effect can the reading of such barbarous records as the inspired word of God have upon the deep-seated fighting instinct in man? Bishop Ufilas was well advised who, when he translated the scriptures for the benefit of the warlike Goths, prudently left out the historical books, lest they should tend to rouse the fierce and sanguinary spirit of the barbarians.

Jesus, himself the alleged "Prince of Peace," said he "came not to send peace but a sword; to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother." The natural result of summing the world up into so many sheep who are to be eternally blest, and so many goats who are to be everlastingly damned, is to lead to hatred, strife and divisions. The injunction of Christianity to "love your enemies" has proved powerless against the selfish interests which its doctrine of salvation encourages. It has rather borne in mind the injunction, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one," than that other precept to resist not evil. It has not forgotten that when John the Baptist preached to the soldiers he did not bid them to resign their calling, but to be content with their wages; that Jesus said nothing about the immorality of war to the centurion any more than about the immorality of polygamy and slavery.

Christianity has not only failed to abolish war, it has been directly responsible for numerous wars. It accuses Mohammedanism of being propagated by the sword, but the historic truth is that almost the whole of northern Europe was converted by the sword. Clovis, Charlemagne, and Olaf Trygifson only gave their enemies the option of baptism or death. In Mexico and South America, Christianity was propagated by the sword. When the Byzantine emperors opposed themselves to the worship of images, the heads of the Christian church absolved their subjects from allegiance and fomented civil war. The seven crusades destroyed the lives of millions, and devastated Europe and Asia for two hundred years, yet were called pre-eminently "holy wars," since they were waged to recover and hold the sepulchre of a dead Jew, a sepulchre which to this day Mahomedan soldiers have to guard lest its rival Greek and Latin Christian showmen should fly at each other's throats.

The inventors have a better claim than the priests to having diminished the chances of war. They have made it so deadly and so costly that the most vain-glorious and Jingo-spirited must pause ere they submit the destiny of nations to its horrid arbitrament. It is even a question whether all so-called "laws of civilised warfare" (mark the phrase) should not be cast aside and explosives used *ad lib.*, that terror at least may act as a deterrent. And this would be the case if, in the words of the old song, those who made the quarrels were the only ones to fight. But while sovereigns and statesmen rule, the people pay the piper. To establish a tribunal of international arbitration, to propose mutual disarmament, even to demand that no war shall be declared without the

sanction of Parliament, would be more efficacious than to invoke the God of Battles, the Lord of Hosts, who declares himself "a man of war" (Ex. xv., 3).

J. M. WHEELER.

THE BLESSINGS OF POVERTY.

BY THE REV. CATER TO-THE-RICH

(II. O. Pentecost, of "Twentieth Century.")

"Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the Kingdom of God."
—LUKE VI., 20.

DEARLY beloved brethren, I desire to call your prayerful attention to the words of my text. And—

First—*Let us consider who uttered these words.*

These precious words were spoken by our blessed Lord and master, Jesus Christ. I need not remind you that he was God. "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colos. ii., 9). These, then, are the words of God, and hence words of truth, and must be received by us as absolutely authoritative. Should we be disposed to doubt the wisdom of such an utterance, it is not permitted us to do so. When God speaks, his word must be received, even though it seem to our poor sin-spoiled minds to be a hard saying. We are not permitted to have opinions contrary to the word of God. And surely this abject submission of the human mind to the divine word is reasonable. When God speaks on any subject, that subject is settled. "O, man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix., 20). Bear in mind, then, that it is God who, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, says to us and all men, "Blessed are ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God."

Second—*Let us consider in what book these words are found.*

They are found in the Bible, which was written by "holy men of God," who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21). We are taught to believe that the Bible is an inspired book. If it is inspired it must be true, and if it is true it is both folly and wickedness to doubt what it says. Many sins are hateful to God, but the sin of unbelief is the most obnoxious, and the most fatal to the human soul. "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark vi. 16). "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 12). On a careful study of the scriptures you will discover, my brethren, that the salvation of your souls turns entirely on the question whether or not you believe what is written in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. If you believe, no matter how bad you are, you shall be saved. If you believe not, no matter how good you are, you shall be damned. Every preacher is not frank enough to put it in just that way, but that is what it comes to. An infidel, though he be what men with their limited understanding call kind, trustworthy, pure, and good, is hateful in God's sight. A believer, though he be what men call cruel, dishonest, immoral, bad, is acceptable to God. I beg of you, therefore, to remember that the words of my text are found in the Bible, and that the Bible is a book to be neither criticised nor questioned, but believed. It might seem to your carnal minds that it is not a particularly happy lot to be poor, but the Bible says it is, and that settles the question. There is nothing for you to do but to believe, unless you wish to become an infidel, or else one of those "higher criticism" Christians, who are no better than infidels.

We see, then, that the words of my text come to us through the medium of an infallible book, which declares that they were spoken by our blessed Lord, who was God in human form. Thus we are on the solid rock of the highest possible, the highest conceivable, authority.

Before proceeding to unfold the precious doctrine enfolded in our text, I wish to dispose of certain captious objections that are sometimes and by some persons made to it. In these degenerate days, when so many

bold, bad men are attacking the authenticity, the authority, and even the truthfulness of the Bible, many Christians weakly and timidly seek to explain away certain unequivocal declarations of God's word, hoping in that way to turn aside the force of the attack which the enemies of God are making on his word. It is needless to explain that such tactics will avail us nothing, for these blatant infidels, pushed on by their father, the Devil, will not be satisfied with any concessions we may make to them, but will drive us, if we allow them, from one position after another until all faith in the divine word will be destroyed. Many of the children of light, however, do not understand this, and timidly give way before the assailants of the faith once delivered to the saints.

In the case of the text before us, some timid Christians hold that our blessed Lord did not really mean to glorify poverty when he said: "Blessed are ye poor," and in order to prove this they point to that passage at Matt. v. 3, wherein Christ says, "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*," and declare that such is the real meaning of our text, which appears in Luke.

There are three answers which may be made to this. In the first place, it may be replied that one rule of interpretation is, that where two similar passages are in question the shortest is probably the genuine one. The reason of this rule is that persons who are disposed to meddle with a text are more apt to add to than to subtract from it. In this case, if we might suppose that our ancient sacred manuscripts had been tampered with, it is more probable that some profane hand added the words "in spirit" to the text in Matthew than that these words were erased from the text in Luke. If we had any sympathy with the impudent methods of those "higher critics," represented in this country by the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, the Rev. R. Heber Newton, and the Rev. Lyman Abbott, men who are so sorely troubling the church, men who should be incontinently excommunicated, and who would be if the poison of unbelief were not so widely diffused throughout the veins of the Body of Christ—the church—if, I say, we had any sympathy with the method of criticism pursued by these disturbers of the peace, these destroyers of the faith, we might suppose that when the church began to grow rich, and the idea of poverty began to grow unpopular, some copyist may have thought to improve on the words of Christ by adding to the text in Matthew the words "in spirit." Those words may have been meant for nothing more than a comment, and may, at first, have appeared only in the margin, and may afterward have gradually crept into the text itself. But I do not offer this as an explanation of the discrepancy between the passages in Matthew and Luke, for such an explanation would cast a shade on the integrity of the scriptures, which I hold to be without blemish.

I therefore proceed to my second argument, which is that the saying in Matthew was uttered at one time and the saying in Luke at another, as will appear from the context in each narrative, and that Christ taught both that the poor in worldly goods are blessed, and that the poor "in spirit," whatever that may mean, are blessed.

My third point is that other sayings of Christ abundantly confirm the doctrine of our text. He bade us to take no thought for the morrow, but to live as the birds and the lilies do (Matt. vi., 23-34); he told a young man that the way to inherit eternal life was to sell all that he had and give the proceeds to the poor (Matt. xix., 16-22); he said that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Matt. xix., 24); there are many other passages of the same import; and to crown all he gave us an example in his own manner of life, by deliberately choosing what would now be called the life of a shiftless vagrant.

In view of these considerations, which I have presented in the merest outline, I do not see how any sane

person can doubt that Christ said, "Blessed are ye poor," or that he meant exactly what he said.

And now, my brethren, we come to the consideration of the substance of the doctrine itself, and in dealing with it I shall be perfectly frank with you.

You will bear witness that I have laid great stress on the fact that Christ actually taught this doctrine of the blessedness of poverty. I have done so for the reason that I realise the necessity of implicitly believing what is written in the scriptures. Upon such belief depends the salvation of our souls. It is dangerous to tamper with the word of God. But when we come to apply this doctrine of poverty to our every-day lives, we find certain difficulties.

For example, if I, your pastor, were as poor as Christ was, how could I secure that leisure that is necessary in order to enable me to study sufficiently to instruct and entertain you on Sundays when you come to hear me preach? How could I live in that style that is necessary to give me the dignity and influence that a minister of the gospel should have in the community? How could I have time to go from house to house among my flock, to the care of which God has called me? How could I attend the public dinners to which I am so often called to say grace and make speeches? Shall these public dinners be had without the saying of grace and without the church being represented in the person of a clergyman? Manifestly not.

Then, too, Christ was not married. I am. He had no wife to support, no children to educate and rear as a gentleman's children should be reared. I have. No necessity was laid on him to lay up something for a rainy day, and as a provision for the support of his family in case of his death. I cannot expect, and you do not wish, my wife to devote her time to the kitchen range, the washtub, and the broom. She is the associate of your wives. She must, and you expect her to, live as a lady, suitably to her station in life. She must have servants in order to enable her to devote her time to the higher pursuits of life. In my station in life, five or ten thousand dollars a year are absolutely necessary to my usefulness in the vineyard of the Lord. I am sure this is clear to you. You will agree with me. You do not want a pastor who is out at elbows and toes, and who must toil for his support at the expense of his intellect and the respectability of his profession.

And again, suppose that all church members were as poor as Christ teaches that we should be, what sort of position would the church occupy in the world? How could we build churches fine enough to satisfy the artistic taste of the times, and to enable the church to compete with the concert halls, theatres, and other places of public assembly to which the people are accustomed to resort. Are we to live in finer houses than we build for our God? That is not to be thought of. That would be wicked. It would be selfish. Plainly, then, we must have fine churches, and such are expensive. If all church members were poor, how should we pay for that style of singing which is so necessary to draw congregations of the more respectable and influential people? And, above all, how should we be able to support our mission chapels and to send missionaries to the perishing heathen, and to carry on those works of charity which are the distinguishing glory and crown of the church of Jesus Christ, the poor man's friend?

Still further: This is an age in which business enterprises require vast sums of money. Nothing can be done without capital. Great wealth, massed in the hands of men of executive ability, is an absolute necessity of civilisation. God has endowed some of his most faithful followers with singular gifts for making money. If all the followers of Christ were poor, the power and influence which are the concomitants of wealth would all be in the hands of the children of darkness, and it cannot be that God ever intended this.

In short, my brethren, think to what a low estate the visible kingdom of God would fall, and to what a powerful position the kingdom of Satan would rise, if all the followers of our blessed Lord were as poor as he himself taught they should be.

(To be concluded.)

DID BYRON TURN METHODIST?

THE above is the question propounded by Mr. Stead in the *Review of Reviews* for October, arising out of an article by Dr. Hayman in *Murray's Magazine* for the same month, in which the doctor contends that there is "more reason" for the assumption (or presumption?) that Byron was "converted" than many people are aware. What the "reason" amounts to we shall presently show. As the extracts given by the *Review of Reviews* have gone the rounds of some of the papers headed as above, it may not be altogether a waste of time to reply to them—though I must admit that my astonishment was great that any reputable magazine should give the slightest prominence to such stale matter as that put forward by Dr. Hayman concerning Byron's conversion to Methodism. I have since read that *Murray's Magazine* has appeared for the last time; and if Dr. Hayman's article was a sample of the mental fare it supplies its readers with, I don't wonder. No doubt though the article in question will have served its turn, and Byron, who could not be converted during life, will be claimed by Christians in death. A Christian lie takes a deal of killing, having apparently as many lives as the Egyptian cattle in the time of the plagues. The Steads of the Christian church, who are anxious to include everybody of any note within the Christian fold, are not to be deterred by such trivial matters as truth and common sense when once they lay themselves out for a task.

Dr. Hayman says: "Dr. Kennedy's conversations in the last six months of Byron's career confirm the view that the religious framework of Byron's mind, long a thing of broken outlines and shifting shadows, was now shaping itself with something like definiteness; that fate was feeling for the helm of conscience. . . . On Byron's side a remarkable practical confirmation is to be gathered from a letter of his to the doctor within a few weeks of his death, where he says: 'Besides the tracts, etc., which you have sent for distribution, one of the English artificers (Brownhill, a tinman) left to my charge a number of Greek Testaments, which I will endeavor to distribute properly. . . . I am trying to reconcile the clergy to their distribution.'" "Here," exclaims Dr. Hayman in triumph, as if he had discovered something altogether new in relation to Byron's life; "here we have the reputed infidel . . . engaged, on his own showing, in work resembling that of the S.P.C.K. or the Bible Society, and that not only for Dr. Kennedy, whom he had reasons to respect, but for Brownhill, 'artificer' and 'tinman.'"

Now, the mere solitary fact that Byron promised Kennedy that he would distribute some tracts and Testaments is considered sufficient evidence to pronounce Byron a Christian and a Methodist! It is a "remarkable practical confirmation" of the fact that Byron promised to distribute tracts and Testaments! There is no other evidence of his "conversion" given by Dr. Hayman whatsoever. And this letter of Byron's was published as far back as 1830 in Kennedy's "Conversations on Religion with Lord Byron and others"!

Dr. Kennedy never, so far as I can learn, pretended he had converted Byron. On the contrary, he admits in a letter to Parry (who was with Byron to the last), that he was unable to do so. But Dr. Hayman apparently knows better than Kennedy. The facts of the case are these, and are very simple. Kennedy was the garrison physician at Cephalonia—an amiable, well-meaning, and very religious man. Byron stayed in

Cephalonia for some time prior to his departure to Greece. He had many conversations with Kennedy on religion, which the latter embodied in the above-mentioned work. Kennedy was on intimate terms with several Englishmen in Cephalonia who held Free-thought opinions, and, knowing Kennedy to be a religious man, invited him to give his views in support of Christianity. This he consented to do, stipulating that he was to have twelve full hours (with intervals, of course) to lay before them his arguments on its behalf. Byron was one of his auditors on the first occasion, but the doctor does not seem to have been very successful in his advocacy, and appears to have bored his hearers considerably with his tedious readings from various Christian apologists. He was told, too, that they had come to listen to *his* arguments, and not those of other men whom they had read or could read for themselves. Although he made a condition that he was to have no questions or interruptions till he had had his twelve hours to substantiate the evidences of Christianity, the stipulation appears to have been intolerable to his hearers, and he was plied with questions till finally he closed his Bible abruptly, when Byron asked him what he meant by the "grace of God." Byron does not seem to have attended many, if any, more of the "lectures," generally having an excuse of some sort when the day came round, but had many disputes with Kennedy on various other occasions.

Professor Eleze, in his *Life of Byron*, says in this connection, p. 288: "He (Byron) even had patience enough to enter into theological discussion with the garrison physician, Dr. Kennedy, and to listen to his tedious Methodistical lectures, which sometimes lasted from five to six hours. Not only in argumentative readiness and in critical faculty, but even in knowledge of the Bible and extent of reading, Byron was far superior to the Scottish doctor, so that the efforts of the latter to convert him were futile. Byron told Parry that these discussions were by no means agreeable to him; that his thoughts were occupied with very different matter; and that the doctor—whom, however, he esteemed for the sincerity and consistency of his character—was not equal to the task he had undertaken."

Parry was Major of Byron's Brigade and was sent out by the London Greek Committee. He was in every respect Byron's confidante towards the end of his life, and lived with him in the same house. He knew nothing of Byron's conversion, but records him as declaring just the opposite. Said Byron to him, "While at Cephalonia a gentleman of the name of Kennedy was introduced to me. I have a respect for him and believe him sincere in his professions. He endeavored to convince me that his ideas of religion were correct. . . . I answered Mr. Kennedy, therefore, without any intention of converting him or allowing myself to be converted. I believe even then, though unprepared, I had very often the best of the argument, and now I am sure I could defeat him" (*Parry's Last Days of Lord Byron*, p. 209). Not much like conversion to Methodism this!

Now as to those tracts and Testaments. Greece was a priest-ridden country, and the free circulation of tracts and Testaments would, from a Freethought standpoint, certainly do much more good than harm. Freethinkers in Catholic or priest-ridden countries would have no objections to become agents of the Bible Society or any other society for the diffusion of knowledge. But as a matter of fact Byron was bitterly opposed to the tract and Testament policy at that time, and there is nothing more evident than that such was the case. In the generosity of his nature we can easily understand him obliging Kennedy in the distribution of the tracts, etc., which he had forwarded to Byron for that purpose, but he would never have done of his own initiation and according to his own judgment. To quote Eleze again (p. 305) he says, "With Parry there had arrived a converted blacksmith, bringing with him a

cargo of tracts and Bibles in modern Greek who received from an English missionary association the magnificent salary of £20 (twenty pounds) per annum to propagate Christianity, *i.e.* Wesleyanism, among Greeks and Turks indifferently. Such a proceeding served of course only to irritate the Greek clergy who exercised a considerable influence over the people and to a political to add a religious contest. Of these plans and ideas Mavrocordate and Byron were the decided opponents, *although they were obliged in some respects to countenance the attempts which were made to carry them out*: all their efforts were vain to induce Stanhope to desist from them." The italics are mine.

Parry has the following on the subject. Byron said: "Even Greece is not to be clear of strife, as respects her religious institutions. I hear that missionaries are to be introduced before the country is cleared of the enemy and religious disputes are to be added to the other sources of discord. How very improper are such proceedings—nothing could be more impolitic; it will cause ill-blood throughout the country; and very possibly be the means of again bringing Greece under the Turkish yoke. Can it be supposed that the Greek priesthood, who have great influence and power, will tamely submit to see interested self-opinionated foreigners interfere with their flocks? I say again, clear the country, and teach the people . . . to read and write and they will judge for themselves." This does not look as if Byron was much of a voluntary tract distributor or an enthusiast in the cause of the Bible Society!

H. J.

ACID DROPS.

When was Jesus born? This is a question that will never be answered till the day of judgment, and perhaps the court will be too busy to do it then. Certainly, if we are to trust the Gospels, Jesus was not born on the twenty-fifth of December. Even the *Christian Commonwealth* admits that no student "imagines it possible that the shepherds and their flocks were freezing by night out of doors in December." It notes also that the learned doctors are at variance—"Light-foot says it was in September; Newcome in October; Paulus in March; Wieseler in February; Lichtenstein in June; Creswell in April; Clinton in spring; Lardner and Robinson in autumn; Strong in August."

What the *Christian Commonwealth* does not tell its readers is that the twenty-fifth of December was a Pagan festival, celebrating the new birth of the Sun, which the Christian church appropriated in the fourth century. Instead of honestly stating the truth, our pious contemporary urges that the date of Christ's birth was purposely made obscure in order that "the birth of the Redeemer might be covered with everlasting glory"—a suggestion that should be sent to Colney Hatch to be properly interpreted.

The Rev. John McNeill, the Scotch Spurgeon as he is sometimes called, will shortly leave the Presbyterian Church in Regent-square, London. According to the *Methodist Times*, he is "a caged eagle" there. A bigger sphere is required for his flights. He is therefore going to assist Moody and Sankey in evangelising Scotland, and when he has completed that task the *Christian World* hopes he will return and evangelise England. In the meanwhile poor old England must get on as well as it can without the "caged eagle," who is rather a Brummagem sort of eagle after all.

One of the "caged eagle's" statements to the London Presbytery is worth consideration. He said that he had had a "call," that is, a good offer from New York. His stipend was to be 10,000 dollars (£2,000), with a prospective pension of 6,000 dols., and a tabernacle was to be built for him. Really this is good business. Preaching is one of the best paying games in the world. It was hard lines when the apostles roamed about with no living but the proceeds of a casual collection. From the lips of such men "Blessed be ye poor" was rather less grotesque than it sounds from the lips of a preacher earning £2,000 a year.

Dr. Dallinger, the Methodist scientist, is all right while he confines himself to his speciality, but when he mounts the pulpit he sometimes makes an exhibition of himself. In a recent sermon he discussed the miracle of the barren fig-tree, and asked, "Why Christ's apparent fierceness? Why curse a tree?" Why indeed? Sceptics regard it as the act of a madman. But Dr. Dallinger explains it in this way. We must regard the story as symbolical; the act was not done to the tree, but through the tree it was done to enlighten the world; the lesson of it being that we must not look to have fruit when we have none. Yes, the miracle is a symbol. And perhaps J. C. himself is a symbol. Even Dr. Dallinger is a symbol—of the mixture of scripture and sense with the alkali of exegesis.

A million fools went to Trèves to see the sham coat of Jesus Christ. It was a pitiable display of human superstition. But Canon Wilberforce sees it in a different light. It may have been "a deranged enthusiasm," he says, yet it was "surely an invigorating acknowledgment in this materialistic age, of the unrivalled empire of the Christ over human souls." Now "unrivalled" is a big word, and in this case it is misapplied; for if one million went to see the Holy Coat at Trèves, ten millions went to see the Paris Exhibition. "Invigorating" is not to be disputed, however; for it must invigorate every priest to see that the fool-crop is still so plentiful.

The Bishop of Edinburgh has or le:el special prayers to be offered to stay the influenza epidemic. What a farce. On the bishop's theory God don't know what he is about. He kills off people wholesale, and has to be entreated to stay his hand. The bishop would be better employed if he ordered his clergy to give lectures on the laws of health.

Prophet Baxter finds the Jerusalem railway was prophesied in a passage in Nahum, which speaks of chariots running with lighted torches, and jostling one against another in the broad ways. Let us hope the trains won't jostle. Evidently we have got to the beginning of the end, though this ought to have come last year. Still, if Boulanger isn't Antichrist someone else is, and the fool crop is as plentiful as ever.

What fools religious fools are! In Hungary there is a sect called Nazarenes. Recently some of the members claimed to have discovered Jesus in the tower of Gyoma and had persuaded him to be crucified. They were about to put this man to death, but were prevented by the authorities. The magistrate before whom they were brought told them he did not wish to interfere with their religion, or even to prevent the crucifixion of the man; but he informed them that if the man did not come to life again in three days he would hang every one of them. The crucifixion was postponed.

At Budapest, in Hungary, all the schools are to remain closed for a month on account of the prevalence of infectious diseases. In three weeks no fewer than 319 school children fell ill of scarlet fever and thirty-one died. Two hundred and three had diphtheria and seventy-four died. In Paris a number of the boys at the Lycée are on the sick list with influenza, and at Odessa about 25,000 persons are suffering from the influenza epidemic. The mortality is steadily rising amongst the poorest class. There is an ever-increasing number suffering from want and sickness, and the situation is aggravated by the continuous influx of destitute peasants from the scarce districts within the province of Kherson.

M. Louret, a Roman Catholic missionary in China, says it is no use disguising the fact; the Chinese obstinately reject Christianity. He looks forward to the whole results of centuries of Christian effort as being wiped out in blood. It is worth inquiring why this is thus. The Chinese are the most religiously tolerant people on the face of the earth. For nearly two thousand years Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism have existed side by side in that great empire, where the better classes are well educated, indifferent, and tolerant to all. But these faiths all inculcate filial respect, which the Chinese think undermined by the teachings of Jesus. They see, moreover, that Christianity, with its inculcation of submissiveness, is only the preliminary to enslavement. Behind the foreign religion they discern the foreigner ready to step in and wrest away their territory. No wonder, when they look around them, they are suspicious of the hog-goat-devil religion.

The City vicar who has ordered his congregation to go fair down on their knees in prayer knows what he is about. He is well aware that a prostrate attitude of the body goes with a prostrate attitude of the mind. The man who only leans over and snuffs his hat will never reverence the minister like the one who goes down on his marrowbones.

There was a regular tug of war at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Newry, last Sunday. The priest would mount a handsome communion cloth with "I. H. S." embroidered like a cross. The vestry objected to this decoration as papistical. One of them went up to remove the cloth, and on seizing it the man of God took hold of the other end. An exciting scene ensued, which resulted in the vestrymen dragging both cloth and clergyman into the vestry, where the obnoxious lettering was cut out and burned.

How rational Christian critics can be when discussing a rival faith! Dr. Tindall, for instance, reading a paper on "Islam: its Origin, Strength, and Weakness," before the old fogies of the Victoria Institute, said Mohammedanism was a corrupt form of late Judaism, taken much from earlier sources. He dwelt on the divorce between religion and morality in the faith of the prophet, quite unaware that all that he said would apply with at least equal truth to his own faith.

The Rev. G. S. Barrett supplies the following instance of current theology. A lady Christian to hardened sinner: "You want to be saved?" "Yes." "Well, you believe that Christ died, don't you?" "Yes." "Then you are saved." Mr. Barrett says this is making salvation a little too easy. Every one ought to know that one thing more is needful—a good contribution towards church expenses.

To establish a new bishopric at Birmingham the church wants to take over the wealthy livings of St. Martin and St. Philip. The Brummagem people, however, don't see why the church should alienate parochial revenues to a purpose for which they were never intended. Let those who want a bishop subscribe for one.

The Rev. M. Laycock, writing in the *Record*, gives many recent instances of Church of England assistants turning out to be Roman Catholic priests, and says that among the papers of a deceased Church of England clergyman was found a dispensation from the Pope.

The Rev. G. H. Lock, of Hull, who recently made such an egregious failure in pretending to discover a murder by the aid of clairvoyance, has been severely taken to task by the Conference of the New Church for bringing that body into disrepute by his alleged magnetic healing.

An elderly female Salvationist is reported to have prayed on Monday at Eastbourne: "Oh, Lord, thou hast probably read in the newspapers how thy day was desecrated yesterday." We are only aware of one paper of which the Lord is a constant reader, and that is the *Freethinker*. A letter from him appears in our present issue, and he has frequently acknowledged our services in vindicating his character from the aspersions of his deluded followers.

Mrs. Sarah Brown was arrested for talking wildly on religion in New York streets. She said, "I won't do it again, unless I have a summons from on high. Then what can I do? I must speak." She had become deranged by mission work.

"Darkest Spinsterdom" is the latest problem taken up by our only "General" Pope Booth. The "way out" has been shown him by colonials who want wives shipped out to them from England. A "Matrimonial Bureau" will, perhaps, be set up at the Army Stores, which will undertake to supply Salvation Sallies with bonnets, tambourines, and husbands on the shortest notice, while the men can be provided with caps, jackets, and wives; orders, accompanied with a remittance, executed with promptitude and dispatch.

The Rev. Mr. Gritton, of the Lord's Day Observance Society, keeps up his contemptible game of sending round penny frighteners to proprietors of places where there are Sunday concerts, warning them that they are liable for prosecution for keeping a disorderly house under the terms of the Act 21, George III., c. 49. He has had no success as yet.

Everybody knows the bark of the L. D. O. S. is worse than its bite. It will rather hold on to the old Act of George III. as a frightener than run the risk of getting it repealed by a prosecution. As long ago as 1866 Vicount Amberley brought in a bill to repeal this well-nigh obsolete instrument of persecution. It was shelved; and there remains a good opportunity for some sensible legislator to clear this and many other remnants of the days of unreason clean off the statute book.

The evening attendance at the British Museum has not been what was expected, and has fallen off so much that it is a question whether it is worth while continuing the experiment. Those who do attend are by no means those for whom the evening opening was intended. The truth is, the working man does not care to take a journey to such places when he is tired with his day's work. He wants them open in the daytime on Sunday, when he has plenty of leisure, and when he is often prevented by bad weather from taking a walk in the park or other recreation.

The Lord's Day Rest Association and the Sabbatarians pretend to have much at heart the interest of the attendants at public institutions. Yet, although they knew that the attendants were paid a fixed sum annually, they urged that these places should be kept open in the evening, in order to stave off the cry for Sunday opening, which would interfere with the monopoly of the day claimed as sacred to gin and gospel. Those in favor of Sunday opening have always urged, and in some cases offered to provide, additional relays of attendants, with one complete day of rest to all.

John Knox, the Presbyterian reformer so much admired in godly Scotland, was strongly in favor of dispossessing the Catholics of their monasteries, convents, and cathedrals. He said, "The best way to drive off the rooks is pull down their nests." Now we are in favor of no such vandalism being practised towards the churches, but we maintain it is only just that church and chapel property should pay its fair quota towards the taxation of the country. By escaping this it is an extra unfair burden upon the other taxpayers.

Mr. John Brown, of the Nuneaton division of Warwick, gave, at the Conference on Rural Reform, an illustration of parsonic influence. He says there is only one school in his village. "One day the vicar went to the school and inquired whether the children had ever been baptised. 'No, sir,' said the oldest, 'my father and mother don't believe in infant sprinkling.' 'Then,' replied the vicar, 'I shall not allow you to come to school. You may give your father notice that he must bring you to be baptised next Sunday, or you won't be able to attend.' The vicar afterwards called and told my wife he had come to give me notice to have my children baptised if they were to attend the school. (Shame.) My wife said, 'Well, sir, you don't know what sort of a man our John is. (Laughter.) But if you show our John whether Christ ever sprinkled a child, or that any of his apostles commanded it to be done, directly or indirectly, our John will bring the children.'" No doubt John Brown's experience is by no means exceptional.

Our Heavenly Father is always in his tantrums lately. Possibly this is owing to the constant diminution of his kingdom by the advance of science. He means to let humanity see it isn't everything. This accounts for the famine in Russia and the earthquakes in Japan. During the recent rough weather at home, amid much disaster to life and property, he inadvertently destroyed some of his own property—blowing down a Methodist chapel at Llanely and tearing off about a ton of leads from the roof of Boston church.

The Bishop of Liverpool has, through his archdeacon, intimated to his clergy that, having heard that in some churches in his diocese laymen have been permitted to read some portions of the morning and evening services, he holds such practices illegal, and requests his clergy not under any circumstances to permit such in future. We are unaware if his brother father in God of Chester is of the same opinion, and will prohibit Mr. Gladstone from reading lessons in Hawarden Church.

Now the Rev. Casper Clutterbuck is in prison, his creditors have met to see what they can get out of the estate. The man of God had £850 a year, which he supplemented to a

large extent with the property of others. He returns his debts at £23,000, but it is doubtful if the full amount of the indebtedness is yet known. For assets he has cash £1 15s. and other property £10, with a number of doubtful claims for larger amounts. The creditors have so little prospect of getting anything that it is doubtful if the full amount of his defalcations will ever be known.

Succi the fasting man has turned up again. He is now going to take poison enough to kill forty ordinary men. Perhaps he has been reading the last chapter of Mark and wants to show he possesses the "signs" of "them that believe." Let us hope the poor man won't commit involuntary suicide.

The London *Echo* gives a new definition of aggressive Christianity. It is "the right of every Christian to make himself a nuisance." Good.

Mr. Irving rounds on the Puritans who denounce the theatre. He does not mind being "in the black books of those amiable beings who superintend our morals, and thoughtfully provide us with little tropical nooks in the next world." He might have added "rent free."

Truth, of Sydney, New South Wales, has printed a letter from W. H. Johnson, declaring that he is the author of the libellous *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, and that it is still sold at 60 Chancery-lane, London. Mr. D. Wallworth replies to Johnson's letter, and relates the circumstances of Mr. Bradlaugh's prosecution of those who were responsible for the book. Mrs. Bonner is her father's legal representative, and any one who knows anything as to the present sale of the libellous *Life*, every copy of which the prosecuted parties undertook to destroy, should communicate with her.

"Prayer and Science" was advertised as the title of the sermon at a Liverpool Wesleyan Chapel. It should have been "Soap and Sugar."

The Rev. George Gladstone proposes to exclude from church fellowship every maker and seller of intoxicating liquor. If he had lived at Cana in Galilee, he would have boycotted Jesus Christ for that wholesale manufacture of inebriating fluid at the marriage feast.

Mr. Rockhill, in his book on *The Land of the Lamas*—to wit Tibet, which is also the land of the Mahatmas—says there are about three priests to every layman. "In their hands is nearly all the wealth of the land, acquired by trading, donations, money-lending, and bequests. Their landed property is frequently enormous, their serfs and bondsmen swarm." Evidently it is the same old game that the priests play in all parts of the world. They preach and pray for our good, and take our goods.

Last week's *Speaker* had two refreshingly outspoken articles. One was on "Royalty in Art" in reference to the Victorian Exhibition. The writer describes our royal house as "a staid German family continually and stupidly commonplace, accepting a little too seriously its mission of crowns and sceptres, and accomplishing its duties, grown out of date, somewhat witlessly, but with heavy dignity and forbearance." The Queen herself is spoken of as the foolish patron of bad art, especially in the person of Boehm, whose statues at Temple Bar "look like figures out of Noah's ark." As for his statue of Wellington at Hyde Park Corner, the writer expresses a pious half-wish that some dynamiter would blow it to smithereens.

The second *Speaker* article is on Archdeacon Farrar's trashy book, *Darkness and Dawn*, a tale of Christianity in the days of Nero. "This is a detestable book," says the reviewer, "written in a style which is every good man's aversion." Farrar is justly censured for painting Pagan vices in the blackest colors, and the Christian virtues in the lightest tints. On the whole the reviewer is glad to wish such a horrid, flashy, sentimental book a "long good night." Probably a candid friend will send the article to Dr. Farrar. He is in too hopeless a state for it to do him any good, but it may give him a bad quarter of an hour, and that is something.

Rays of Light, a Berlin paper devoted to Atheism and popular science, has been confiscated for insulting pious

Emperor William, who recently declared his will was the supreme law of the state. All who continue loyal to this doctrine are described by our Berlin contemporary as "debased boot-lickers." So they are, and confiscating the paper that says so does not alter the fact. Rulers like pious William are anachronisms. The sooner they disappear the better. But they will linger for a while in Teutoland—"king-deluded Germany," to use the sagacious language of our own great poet of Atheism and Republicanism.

It appears from the letters of "A Clergyman" to the *Pall Mall Gazette* that a lady contracted cancer in the mouth from taking the chalice containing the blood of her blessed Redeemer. Taking the sacrament appears to be as dangerous, if not as dirty, as slobbering the Bible cover in courts of justice.

We were a listener the other day to a discussion between two persons that greatly amused us. One said to the other: "You will admit that God is in the host, when it is offered at mass, won't you?" "Why," said the other, "if your God were as large as the universe, he would have been eaten up long ere this with all you fellows gnawing away at him for two thousand years." The discussion closed with this clincher.—*Boston Investigator*.

The rector of St. Mary's, Woolwich, says in his *Parish Magazine*: "His door bell goes all day long, friends come and consult him about everything except their souls. He is very glad to try and help friends into the Arsenal, but he would be more glad if they would ask him how to get into Paradise." The Woolwich people have apparently found out what their parson is fit for. They know he knows no more about Paradise than they do themselves.

The Rev. John Napleton, rector of Wymington, Beds, separated from his wife, and agreed to pay her £30 a year towards her support. She now brings an action for payment, which has been adjourned for three months in order that the parties might come to an agreement. The county court judge suggested that when the private affairs of clergymen were concerned everything possible should be done to avoid a scandal.

Arthur Howard, a Methodist local preacher at Weston, Bath, has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment with hard labor for deserting his wife and children to elope with and console another Christian woman afflicted with a drunken husband.

We have had sent us from A. Holness, 14 Paternoster-row, a penny tract entitled "The Bible, how it was Compiled." It is said to have reached its twenty-first thousand, so presumably it meets a want of some kind. Evidently those it is intended for are not very critical. All the old orthodox positions are assumed. Thus the writer says, "Our Savior bears testimony to the authenticity of Moses' writings, for he said, 'He wrote of Me' (John v. 46). These words make it unanswerable that the knowledge and historical information is correct."

A Declaration of the First Principles of the Oracles of the Deity is the title of a Christadelphian manual, issued by R. Roberts, of Birmingham. It appears the brethren of Christ dispense with Old Nick. It says (p. 23): "We affirm that the Devil is not (as is commonly supposed) a personal, supernatural agent of evil, and that in fact there is no such being in existence. The Devil is a scriptural personification of sin in the flesh." What we want to know is why God should not be considered a scriptural personification also.

Once a teacher asked her class, "Who knows everything we say and do?" when she received the unexpected reply, "The fowk that bides a' side's."

The *Scottish Pulpit* commences a series on "By-paths of Religion" with an article on "Glasgow Secularists." The only point charged against them is their poverty, though it is surprising to hear that "teetotalism has been one of the main causes which has brought it [the Glasgow society] to its present helpless condition." Hypocrisy, greed and drunkenness unite so thoroughly with religion in the second city of the empire, that the Glasgow Secularists may be congratulated on standing out in all respects from the religionists. "A honest man, how'er sae puir, is king o' men for a' that."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Owing to the Christmas Holidays the "Freethinker" will be published on Wednesday next week. Lecture Notices, etc., must not reach us later than the first post on Monday.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, December 20, The Rink, Goldsmith-street, Nottingham: at 11, "Who Wrote the Bible?"; at 3, "The Way to Heaven"; at 7, "The Follies of Theosophy."

December 27, Hall of Science.

January 3, Birmingham; 10, Bolton; 17, Newcastle Sunday Lecture Society; 24 and 31, Hall of Science.

February 7, Bradford; 14, Leeds; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

March 6, Merthyr.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Dec. 20 and 21, Leicester; 27, Birmingham. January 3 and 10 (morning and evening), Hall of Science, London; 14 and 15, Portsmouth; 17, Milton Hall, London; 24 and 31, Birmingham. February 7, Hull; 14, Glasgow; 15, Hamilton; 16, 17, 18 and 19, public debate in Glasgow; 21, Edinburgh; 28, Birmingham. March 7, Birmingham; 14 and 21 (morning and evening) Hall of Science, London; 28, Birmingham. April 4, Manchester; 11 and 17, Birmingham; 25, Sheffield. May 1 and 8 (morning and evening), Hall of Science, London; 15 and 22, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

A. WOLGEMUTH.—Freethinker and Atheist are not necessarily identical. Victor Hugo and Goethe were Pantheists; Littré and Bradlaugh were Atheists; Darwin was an Atheist in the proper sense of the word. See Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God*.

J. D.—Mr. Forder will send contents-sheets to the newsagent. Thanks for your trouble in the matter.

C. DOEG.—Wednesday is too late for Lecture Notices. This accounts for the "slight" on Mr. Small. You see the fault is yours.

C. T. MOHUN.—The Catholic work referred to in *St. John's Nightmare* was entitled *A General History of the Christian Church, chiefly drawn from the Apocalypse*. Several editions appeared between 1781 and 1819. "Signor Pastorini" was a pseudonym, the author being Charles Walmesley, Roman Catholic Bishop of Rama, in *partibus*, i.e., bishop of the western district of England. He was born in Lancashire about 1722 and died in 1795.

J. C.—You will find the information in the N. S. S. Almanack, which every member ought to buy.

G. E. CONRAD NAEWIGER has taken a newspaper shop at 32 Cannon-street, Hull, where he sells all Freethought and advanced literature.

R. H. WELLINGS.—No.

REX REGES.—Dr. Conyers Middleton's *Free Inquiry*, by showing that the belief in the miraculous powers of the early Christians was based on the evidence of credulous and untrustworthy persons, did something to break down the whole fabric of Christian supernatural pretensions. It is satisfactory as far as it goes, but somewhat out of date. *Supernatural Religion* is better worth buying.—Glad you appreciate *Satires and Profanities*.

W. MARTIN.—Hospitals were erected in India in the third century B.C. by the Buddhist King Asoka. The temples of Esculapius were also used for the curing of disease.

MANCHESTER.—You did not sign your letter, no doubt inadvertently. Join the N. S. S. by all means. You can still be a Socialist or an Individualist. Those who preach violence in the days of a free press and a wide suffrage are foolish when they are not wicked.

A. H. HUNTER.—Sorry to hear you had difficulty in getting boys to sell the *Freethinker* at Nottingham, but glad to hear you were more successful with the newsagents. Peg away.

C. B. BROWN, 135 Felix-road, Ealing, W., writes: "Having received one of J. W. Gott's £1 parcels (No. 3), which has surpassed all my expectations, I can honestly recommend them to other members of the N. S. S."

A. A.—Your friend's pencillings are worthy of a Jesuit. When he makes "could" a mistake for "would" he forgets, or thinks you forget, that the Bible was not written in English.

W. ROSS.—Will read and transmit.

W. J. K.—Catalogue sent. Pleased to know you have been a regular reader of this journal since a copy of one of our Christmas Numbers fell into your hands accidentally.

P. BOORD.—Orders should be accompanied by remittance and sent as below to Mr. Forder.

LEON DU PLERGNY.—Thanks for paper and congratulations from the local "saints."

J. MARTIN.—Your new Derby Branch is a small one, but nine members is more than Jesus Christ could boast on the eve of his death. We are glad to hear that you mean business. If you can obtain a hall you certainly shall have some lectures.

W. H. LAWRENCE.—Pleased to receive your good report of Mr. Moss's missionary work at Deptford. The financial difficulty is always the greatest in such enterprises. We hope the local Freethinkers will give pecuniary assistance.

T. QUINN.—Too long. You need practice in composition.

T. CRISFIELD.—You ask us to explain what you call "facts." We do not know them to be such, and we decline to account for them. Mr. Labouchere has long had a bank note for a considerable sum at the service of any "clairvoyant" who can read the number. Why not apply to him?

JOSEPH BROWN.—Mr. Foote found your letter awaiting him on Tuesday afternoon when he returned to London. The report is too late for insertion this week; it will probably have to be summarised for next week's issue.

NEWCASTLE.—Miss Campbell's name was probably not included by the Organisation Committee in the *Almanack* list of lecturers through their thinking she was only on a visit to England. We are quite sure they intended no discourtesy.

W. DAVIS.—Mr. Foote cannot say at the moment by what train he will travel to Nottingham. He will bring a good parcel of literature.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Truthseeker—Lichtfreund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel Progressive Thinker—Cosmopolitan—Flaming Sword—Echo—Countryman—Manchester Guardian—Glasgow Herald—Scottish Pulpit—Essex Standard—Weekly Times and Echo—Bradford Daily Telegraph—Open Court—Better Way—Oldham Evening Chronicle—Cambria Daily Leader—Golden Way—Carrier Dove—Religio-Philosophical Journal—South-west Recorder—Ashton-under-Lyne Reporter—La Verité Philosophique—Lancashire Evening Express—Leomnster News—Stockport Chronicle—Brighton Herald—St. Mary's Woolwich Parish Magazine—Modern Thought—Science Siftings—Goodall's Almanack.

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.

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.

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.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Manchester was a beautiful spectacle on Sunday morning. A sodden sky and a merciless, irritating rain gave a special charm to the lovely streets. Naturally there was not a large attendance at the Secular Hall. In the afternoon the audience had improved, though the weather had not. By the evening the rain ceased, and the third meeting was a crowded one. Mr. Foote had a very hearty reception. His opponents were two; Mr. Collier, who spent most of his time in telling the lecturer how to lecture; and a mountebank speaker called Coleman. The audience appeared to have had quite enough of both exhorters. After the meetings collections were made, seemingly very good ones, for two distressed members of the Branch.

On Monday evening Mr. Foote lectured at Blackburn on "The Follies of Theosophy." The audience was larger than the one Mr. Watts had in the previous week. This is encouraging, and the local Branch will doubtless make headway if it can only continue its work during the winter.

The lady who let the hall for the Blackburn lectures is a temperance missionary. She is broad-minded and believes in fair play for all sides. But some of the bigots have been denouncing her. Fortunately the *Evening Express* stands on the right side in this matter. In a leading article it says

that we are engaged in a profitless task, but that is no reason why our views should be suppressed or denied an impartial hearing.

Mr. Sam Standring's presence in South Lancashire should give a fillip to Secular organisation. His residence is to be at Manchester, and the Branch there will have a first claim upon his services. Mr. Sam Standring is of an active and enthusiastic temperament. He is sure to put "go" into the work, and if he is fairly well supported we have no doubt of his being a real assistance to the Freethought cause in the whole district.

This evening (Dec. 20) Mr. Sam Standring delivers his last lecture in London before leaving for Manchester. As it is to be in the Hall of the Finsbury Park Branch, which is near the scene of his chief labors during the last two or three years, his friends will rally round him and wish him good-speed.

A public meeting to protest against the prosecution of Mr. H. S. Young takes place in the Athenæum, Tottenham-court-road, on Friday, Dec. 18, at 8. The list of speakers includes Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allinson, G. W. Foote, J. M. Robertson, and G. Standring.

Fund for Settling Mr. Watts in Birmingham:—Daniel Baker, £100; George Anderson, £5 5s.; W. Paul, £2 10s.; Thomas Wild, £2 2s.; W. F. Carter, £1; Amicus, 10s.; Mr. Westwood, 10s.; H. V. Mayer, 2s. 6d.; J. W. Atkins, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, 6d.

We publish in another column a report of the re-opening of Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. We are glad to learn that, despite the wretched weather, the meetings were successful. Of course the absence of Mr. G. J. Holyoake through illness was a great disappointment, which caused general regret and imposed extra duties upon Mr. Watts. We hope that the Freethought veteran has, ere this, recovered. His letter to Mr. Watts announcing his inability to keep his engagement is unique and characteristic of the writer. Here it is:—

"Brighton, Dec. 11, 1891.

"Dear Watts,—For some days I have had a cold, which, instead of abating, is still active and industrious. Indeed, it makes overtime. Dr. Scott says I must not leave a warm room unless I want to die. That's where the trouble comes in. I don't want, because it would be such a waste of the money my friends lately spent in buying me an annuity. When I think of the afternoon Conference I could go mad—only we have no lunatic asylum here. I wanted to express my sense of the splendid thing my friend Mr. Baker has done, and my belief in your success at the Hall of the famous name. I tell Dr. Scott I am to speak on Freethought. He says there is no Freethought allowed when influenza is about. My friend Alderman Manwaring had a cold three days ago. He did not believe in it. It turned to influenza, and now he is dead—which is absurd. Though I am not likely to recover so as to be able to travel, I have sent to Mr. Stead, who has published his Christmas Ghost Stories, which if true show every man has a double that goes out on business while he is at home. If Mr. Stead is right he will be able to send my double down on Sunday night, and if it does not deliver a good lecture I will disown it when it comes back.—Yours anyhow; on the verge of being worse,
GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE."

London Freethinkers should remember the social gathering at the Hall of Science on New Year's Eve. The tickets are one shilling. The London Secular Federation's annual dinner takes place on the following Thursday (Jan. 7). Messrs. Foote, Watts and Holyoake will be present. Ladies and gentlemen need not wear evening dress. We note this to correct a false impression that has got abroad somehow. The same note applies to the other social parties.

Mr. Foote's lecture on "Shelley and the Poetry of Atheism" was a change in the Thursday evening program at the London Hall of Science, and to all appearance it was heartily relished by the audience, which gathered in spite of the weather. Illustrative passages from *Queen Mab*, *The Cenci*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and the lyrics, including *To a Skylark*, *Liberty*, and the *Men of England*, were heard with breathless attention, and loudly applauded. It would have been some reward to Shelley to see so many men and women drinking in the music of his singing.

That the glory of God may the more abound, American sky-pilots have been industriously circulating that Colonel Ingersoll had appeared in the character of a prophet, and predicted that in ten years there would be more theatres than churches. The editor of the *Truthseeker* inquired concerning the same, and the Colonel wrote as follows:

"New York, Nov. 18, 1891.

"E. M. Macdonald—My Dear Friend: Of course I never said 'that in ten years there would be more theatres than churches.' I believe that the preacher who first started this story has taken it back.

"It never occurred to me that in so short a period as ten years there would be more theatres than churches. I know that civilisation is a slow process, and that it takes time to develop the minds and tastes of the people. Very little can be done in ten years.

Yours always,

"R. G. INGERSOLL."

Will the pious cease circulating this story or continue to glorify their God?

The *New York Herald* published recently a symposium headed, "What is this State called Life?" Col. Ingersoll was about the only one who was not afraid to confess his ignorance in the matter. He said: "Life is something I know nothing about. It is something that no one knows anything about except the ministers. They know all about it; the other smart men gave it up long ago."

No point was more strongly emphasised and applauded at the Rural Conference convoked by the National Liberal Federation than the determination to be rid of the domination and despotism of the parson and the squire.

In France the agitation for complete separation of Church and State is going forward. The clericals only give a nominal adherence to the Republic in their own interest, and because they see that any other cause is hopeless. Republicans see they must not be allowed to hinder the advent of religious equality.

The Liverpool Secular Tontine Society has just concluded a very successful year. The subscriptions are 6d. per week, with 1s. per quarter for management. After meeting the claims for sick pay, medical attendance, etc., a sum of £1 per member will be divided. Few societies offer such advantages at so small a cost, and the new year offers a good opportunity for those desirous of becoming members.

The class in connection with the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S., for the pursuit of definite courses of study, was most satisfactorily inaugurated on Sunday afternoon last. Preliminary arrangements were made, and the first regular meeting will be on Jan. 3, at 3 p.m. The text-book chosen for the first three meetings is Professor W. K. Clifford's *Seeing and Thinking*. The system followed will be that adopted at the universities, but there will be no fees.

Mr. Stanley Jones had bad weather for his visit to Belfast, but his lectures were well attended, and he replied effectively to his opponents.

On Sunday the platform of the Hall of Science will be occupied by Mr. J. M. Robertson, who takes as his morning subject Neo-Malthusianism, and discourses in the evening on "The Whitewashing of Christianity."

Mr. Bradlaugh's Memorial at Northampton will take the form of a marble bust by an eminent sculptor.

It appears from the *Liberator* that Joseph Symes had a rough time of it in breaking ground at Broken Hill. He took the theatre to reply to a local clergyman, but, although four parsons were present, or perhaps on that very account, he was hooted, howled at and interrupted until the gas was put out. He, however, delivered his lecture in the Town Hall on the following Tuesday.

Compulsory vaccination has few if any friends in the Freethought ranks. Certainly it has no friend in Mr. J. F. Haines, of 212 Mile-end-road, London, E., who has printed as a penny pamphlet, under the title of *A Spark from the East*, his address to the local Board of Guardians as the head of a deputation. Mr. Haines puts the case against compulsion clearly and forcibly.

The new directorate of the American Secular Union are located at Chicago, the Hon. C. B. Waite, one of the U.S. judges, being president. One of its first proceedings will be to get up a mass meeting to demand the opening of the World's Fair on Sunday. Mrs. M. A. Freeman is the new secretary. Her address is 402 Madison-street, Chicago.

The Open Court, of Chicago, Dec. 3, prints an unpublished letter of Thomas Paine, written to Jefferson, then American Minister in Paris, and dated Feb. 16, 1789, when Paine was staying in Broad-street-buildings, London. Paine was then employed on his iron tubular bridge, but at the same time strongly interested in the progress of events in France, soon to culminate in the fall of the Bastille.

The great Lick telescope, one of the results of the benevolence of the infidel philanthropist, reveals about 100,000,000 stars, some of them so small that 30,000 of them in one mass would scarcely be visible to the naked eye.

RE-OPENING OF BASKERVILLE HALL.

LAST Sunday was an eventful day with the Secularists and Freethinkers of Birmingham and its surrounding districts. Baskerville Hall, through the generosity of Mr. Daniel Baker, has become the property of Mr. Charles Watts, to be used for the advocacy of Secular principles. For the last few years the building has been sadly neglected; so much so, that its appearance had become anything but inviting. When, therefore, Mr. Watts took possession, he resolved to have it thoroughly repaired and renovated, and for this purpose the hall has been closed for a brief period. On Sunday last it was re-opened. The change that has taken place for the better is striking. The nine rooms of the dwelling-house have been repapered and repainted, the hall has been redecorated and supplied with new gasfittings, and the stage has a newly-painted drop-scene and wings; a large stove has also been placed in the middle of the hall for heating purposes. The entire cost of the improvements inside and outside of the building has been just upon £250. Towards this sum Mr. Baker has generously given £100; this act of generosity, in addition to the free gift of the hall, etc., is a proof how anxious Mr. Baker is to promote the Secular cause in his native town.

The appearance of the inside of the hall on Sunday was exceedingly bright and cheerful. The stage was ornamented with choice flowers, which had been kindly given by one of the members of the Society; the front seats were cushioned, and the portraits of Mr. Baker, G. J. Holyoake, Mr. Bradlaugh, Charles Watts, and others adorned the walls. Friends were present from Rugby, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Dudley, West Bromwich, Leicester, and other midland districts. The severe storm and heavy rain, which continued the whole of the day, largely affected the morning and afternoon audiences; but, despite this drawback, the hall was filled in the evening, and from what the present writer heard from the visitors, it was evident that the new arrangements met with the hearty approval of those present. Mr. and Mrs. Watts entertained a number of friends as guests to tea, among others were Mr. Baker, Mr. Gimson (of Leicester), Mr. Holland (of Bilston), Mr. Carter, and Mr. and Mrs. Adams (of West Bromwich).

There was one unfortunate and most serious hitch in the day's proceedings, and that was the absence of Mr. G. J. Holyoake through illness. Under the circumstances, Mr. Watts had to do his best without the aid of his valued friend. Many were the regrets expressed, not only that the "Father of Secularism" could not be present, but also at the cause of his absence. Mr. Watts lectured in the morning on "Scepticism in Modern Thought," and in the evening on "Secularism: what it Teaches and why it is Taught." In both lectures he clearly indicated why Secularists dissented from popular orthodoxy, and what the principles were that would be promulgated at Baskerville Hall.

In the afternoon short addresses were delivered by Messrs. Middleton, Holland, Carter, Davidson, Gimson, and Charles Watts. These gentlemen spoke approvingly of the change that had taken place at Baskerville Hall, advocated a Midland Secular Federation, congratulated Mr. G. W. Foote upon the able manner in which he is leading our movement, the great services rendered to the cause by Mr. Bradlaugh during his heroic life, and the

generosity of Mr. Daniel Baker in giving Baskerville Hall to Mr. Watts.

In the evening, before and after the lecture, we had some excellent music; Mr. Randle and Mrs. Bridge gave selections on the piano, and Master Knight favored us with two violin solos, which were enthusiastically received. Mrs. Charles Watts recited "The Life Boat," and so delighted the audience that she was induced to give an encore.

After the evening lecture Mr. Watts proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Baker for the generous and valued gift he had made to the Secular cause, pointing out that the benevolent act was prompted by no desire for popularity, nor to secure any official position, but solely for the purpose of aiding the Secular movement which he (Mr. Baker) had so much at heart. The vote was carried by applause, repeated again and again. Mr. Baker replied in a neat and effective speech, delivered with great emotion. He said that he had done what to him was a pleasure, and he hoped his action would be emulated by others. His one object was to do something to secure for Secularism a respectable home in his native town, and he sincerely hoped that Mr. Watts would be supported in his endeavors to make Secular principles understood and appreciated in Birmingham.

The sale of Freethought literature was very good, every copy of the *Freethinker* was disposed of, and orders taken for additional copies. VERITAS.

OBITUARY.

THE LATE DR. KUENEN.—A candid Biblical scholar has passed away in the person of Dr. Abraham Kuenen of Leyden, who died in that city on Dec. 11. Born at Haarlem in 1828, he began life as an apothecary's boy. At the University he made such progress that as soon as he had completed his studies it was resolved to make him Professor of Theology. For this purpose he became a pastor, but never officiated as such. He became Professor in 1852. Dr. Kuenen is chiefly known by his great work on *The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State*, which was translated into English by Mr. May. Dr. Kuenen's standpoint is stated in his Introduction. He says: "For us the Israelite religion is one of the principal religions; nothing less, but nothing more. Israel is no more the pivot on which the development of the whole world turns than the planet which we inhabit is the centre of the universe. Those who think they notice a specific difference between it and its sisters overlook that which is defective and erroneous in the religion of Israel, and have no eye for the excellencies of other religions." He shows that at first the religion of Israel was polytheistic and that practically it remained so until the time of the Babylonian captivity. The reader obtains a view of the natural historical growth of Judaism, very different from the idea of its being a god-given revelation. In 1882 Dr. Kuenen came to England by invitation to deliver the Hibbert Lectures of that year on "National Religions and Universal Religions." He has since published an important work on *The Hexateuch*, showing the results of recent criticism, and at the time of his death was superintending a comprehensive translation and commentary on the Old Testament by Dutch scholars, and was recasting his Religion of Israel. Dr. Kuenen has done substantial service in the cause of rational freethought Biblical criticism and the result of his labors will not pass away.

William James Bowden (aged 18), son of one of our members, died on Sunday last after seven months' intense suffering, which he bore with remarkable fortitude. Deceased had, by devotion to his studies, gained scholarships (in open examinations) which enabled him to obtain a technical education qualifying him to commence a career in which he had shown considerable ability. The Secular Burial Service will be read at the interment, which takes place on Dec. 19 at the Kensal Green Cemetery about three o'clock.—H. COURTNEY (West London Branch.)

The *Indian Witness*, a missionary journal writes: "We confess our chances of success are greatest with those who know us least. Let us hasten then and win rural India for Christ ere the venter of western civilisation becomes an almost impenetrable armor of defence against our teaching." This is plain speaking. Uneducated people who do not even know how to sign their own names are fit subjects for conversion. And education, of course, is an impenetrable armor. The more illiterate folk are the more likely to swallow the nonsensical doctrines of Christianity; and of such is the kingdom of heaven.—*Cosmopolitan*.

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Churton Collins's *Illustrations of Tennyson* shows scholarship and research, but he carries too far his theory of Tennyson's indebtedness to his poetical predecessors. There are some people, as Coleridge observed, who fancy that no man draws from the living well, but helps himself from another's bucket. Different eyes may see the same phenomena and describe them in much the same way, even to a particular epithet; and the same reflection will have occurred to minds of similar calibre, though parted by thousands of miles and thousands of years.

Mr. Collins points out how Tennyson is steeped in Lucretius—the Atheist who, in the words of Mrs. Browning, "denied divinely the divine," and died "Chief poet by the Tiber side." This should alone be sufficient to check the rancid orthodox nonsense about the incompatibility of poetry and Atheism. Poetry is a human product. It does not descend from above. It springs from the intellect and imagination of high natures, who fill earth, air and sky with the beautiful creations of their own minds. A dull man does not see the poetry of nature because he has none in himself.

George Meredith's admirers will be glad to learn that his great poem, *Modern Love*, will shortly be reprinted with two unpublished poems, *The Sage Enamored* and *The Honest Lady*. The volume is announced to appear early in the new year.

Walt Whitman's *Good-bye my Fancy* is just published at Philadelphia. The old note of assurance of immortality seems lowered.

Good-bye my Fancy!
Farewell dear mate, dear love!
I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you
again,
So good-bye my Fancy!

The prose jottings in Whitman's new volume are very characteristic. They contain no fresh principles or ideas; that was hardly to be expected; but they reveal the heart of oak in the gallant old man's breast. Whatever we may think of Whitman's verse, who can deny him grand manliness?

Lady Burton has apparently not submitted the whole question of her husband's manuscripts to her spiritual director, for she is announced as preparing his *Catullus* and *Pentamerone* for the press. What the world will most wish to see is her promised *Life of Sir Richard Burton*.

M. Gass, a Glasgow Christian advocate, puts forward a pamphlet on *Moses and the Land Question*, in which he makes the Jewish legislator a model for all time. This seems to us mere gas. The legislation suited for the tribes of Palestine might be quite out of place in England. There is, moreover, no evidence that the law of Jubilee was ever carried into effect, or was other than a bogus law ascribed to Moses nearly a thousand years after he was buried. What is certain is, that the Mosaic land legislation ensured private persons in the perpetual right to family estates. It did not secure any of the value to the community. Entail was its essence, but the abolition of the principle of entail in favor of the principle of freedom is the essence of modern land reform. The Scottish Land Restoration League, which endorses Mr. Gass's pamphlet, will hardly forward their object by appealing to a legislator who set up a priestly caste and quartered them on the people, and who endorses polygamy and slavery.

Mr. W. E. Henley is to be jointly responsible with Mr. J. S. Farmer for his *Slang and its Analogies*, about which there was so much trouble with the printers. The work is issued to subscribers only.

Archdeacon Farrar's *Darkness and Dawn, or Scenes in the Days of Nero*, which we have not seen, and probably shall not trouble to see, is very unfavorably reviewed in the *Daily News*. It says: "The dialogues are neither natural nor spontaneous; they read like strings of borrowed sentences, and the persons have the air of puppets jerked by wires. The language is of the choicest, but it has a

hollow sound." It is just when Archdeacon Farrar's language is said to be of the "choicest" that we object to it most. He is the very man to alter "Jesus wept" into "the ever-blessed Savior of mankind melted into a flood of embittered tears."

Charles Stuart is another Christian advocating polygamy from the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and putting forward a book, *Polygamy and Polyandry*, in defence of his patriarchal views.

J. Fraser's *Blyth and Tyneside Comic Annual* for 1892 is a rare twopennyworth of north country humor and drollery, which is evidently popular in the district from which it emanates.

Mr. John Vickers, who many years ago put out a Theistic work with the title of *The New Koran*, and who has since published a *History of Herod the Great*, whitewashing that monarch from the aspersions of Josephus and the Christian fathers, has just published a new book through Messrs. Williams and Norgate, entitled *The Real Jesus*, treating the prophet of Nazareth mainly from the Jewish standpoint.

W. Emmette Coleman continues, in *The Golden Way*, his exposure of Madame Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*, which he shows not only quotes at second and third hand, but "is permeated in all its parts with garbling and literary forgery."

The Rev. W. S. Heathcote has written a little book entitled *My Salvation Army Experience*. Attracted by the cheerful spirit of the army, he became a member in 1886, but left somewhat in disgust last year. He found it compounded of Quakerism, Methodism and Jesuitism. Its success he now attributes to a free use of the comic element, female agency, and, above all, the putting of every member to work for the service of the Army. He thinks the Army has not solved the problem how to reach the masses, and as to "building up souls," it is a failure. Mr. Heathcote has much to say on the "military imperialism" of the Booth dynasty, which he predicts will in the long run ruin the Army.

A HUMOROUS HYMN.

BY DR. ISAAC WATTS.

My thoughts on awful subjects dwell,
Damnation and the dead.
What horrors seize the guilty soul
Upon a dying bed!
Lingering about the mortal shores,
She makes a long delay,
Till, like a flood, with rapid force,
Death sweeps the wretch away.
Then swift and dreadful she descends
Down to the fiery coast,
Amongst abominable fiends—
Herself a frightful ghost.
There endless crowds of sinners lie,
And darkness makes their chains,
Tortured with keen despair they cry,
Yet wait for fiercer pains.
Not all their anguish and their blood
For their old guilt atones,
Nor the compassion of a God
Shall hearken to their groans.

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. 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.

JACK'S YARN.

AMONG the seventy or so pious gospel-forgers, whose absurdities are nearly all justly relegated to oblivion, and an equal if not greater number of *quasi*-Evangelists, the lying contents of whose manuscripts happily never obtained publicity, there stands out one pre-eminently notorious for his forgeries and fabrications. This unscrupulous scribbler is none other than Jack Logos, *alias* St. John the Divine, *alias* St. John the Evangelist, he of the Patmos nightmare celebrity, a Greek Christian no doubt, who fancied himself to be the Holy Ghost's principal amanuensis, and who therefore busied himself most abundantly in perfecting and complimenting other folk's defective gospels, especially those of the synoptists. When Jack Logos presumed to impersonate "*the disciple whom Jesus loved,*" he displayed a selfish desire that his own narrow-minded and necromantic notions of salvation should supersede the prevailing impressions of the second century, in which he lived, and that his gospel, in its entirety, should be the one popular manual for all succeeding ages (see John xx. 24, 25). If Jack Logos had not been a rank impostor, he would not have ignored so contemptuously every parable recorded by the synoptists, nor would his writings have been so closely associated with Judea, a part of Palestine of the very least interest to an old Galilean fisherman. Nor is it probable that so voluminous a writer, who could brood and dawdle over twenty-two chapters of such romantic rubbish as the Revelation, would desultorily take a hop, stride and jump clean over the whole of the parables and over all the miracles save *two*? The *real* disciple John, living a century prior to the pseudo-John, in his reputed old age, and having most of the other accepted gospels at his command, and his own knowledge of further requirements into the bargain, would have been inspired by the Holy Ghost, who knew what sceptical periods would succeed the dark religious ages, to traverse the very same ground that the other inspired writers had tramped, and to narrate in full every parable, miracle, saying and other circumstance with corroborative exactitude. But such was not the case, and we are not at all surprised. Jack Logos, being merely a Greek interloper, very much minus the Holy Spirit, but extremely plus a full stock of religious conceit and egotism, dabbled maudlingly over reams of parchment, like many modern laud-hunting whangdoodles, and ignominiously sought for fame more as a scripture author than as a true historian.

Consider his creations—turning water into wine is nowhere to be found in the seventy gospels, save that of Jack Logos! On the five following miracles—healing the nobleman's son, the impotent man at Bethesda, and the man born blind, the raising of the stinking corpse of Lazarus and the second (?) draught of fish—the rest are silent! Jack Logos is the only veracious chronicler of Jesus Christ establishing a fried-fish shop on the shores of Galilee! When Jack Logos discovered that some prophet in the Old Testament had made a reference to some exemplary body being pierced, he jots it down in his miracle supplement that a Roman soldier, exceeding his duty, dashed cavalierly up Calvary and plunged his spear into Christ's side, whence miraculously issued both blood and water. Why he should entertain a notion that water should rush out of a spear-wound is unaccountable. But of the eight miracles he cites, four are connected with water; and we know he often mentions that commodity in the Apocalypse, and that he was surrounded by the element at Patmos. We suspect that he suffered from its presence on the brain. However, his invention of the spear-wound provided him with capital for subsequent purposes, such as the sceptical Didymus probing the wounded side. It has also furnished subject matter for poetical pietists like Watts, Wesley, etc., in such effusions as:

There is a romance filled with blood,
Drawn from his *manual* veins—
His *side* was pierced by soldier's rude;
His *pedals* suffered pains.—P. ARDY.

Space will only permit at present the slightest reference to the incubus which Mr. Logos so graphically depicts in his Apocalyptic Extravaganza—the Revelation, from the last two verses of which we gather the cheek and self-sufficiency of the fellow by the dire penalties he would impose on anybody else who attempted to do by his rotten scrawl as he has done by the three other fishy impostors with whom he is associated in the blessed New Testament.

P. W. BALDWIN.

J. HOVA COMPLAINS.

Realms of Bliss, Correspondence Dept.
Nov. 23, 1891, 181,765,437.

DEAR SIR,—I notice my son (J. C.) has been airing his grievances in a recent issue of your journal. There would be some excuse for this conduct if he had been maligned and libelled as I have by my alleged followers. They have not hesitated to declare that the most cruel and bloody butcheries recorded were perpetrated by my express directions, and have represented that numbers of most consummate scoundrels were under my especial patronage. I prefer to deal with these aspersors as they arrive here, and consider the action of the heir-apparent in writing to newspapers somewhat undignified. You will therefore be interested to learn that I have required him to sign a paper undertaking to give up this pernicious habit. His manifestations of discontent have had a regrettable influence on members of my orchestra, some of whom have thrown their harps and halos aside and struck—positively struck. They complain of long hours and lack of variety in the music, having always to twang the same old tune. They also demand new uniforms, their halos having become worn out; they actually allege that it is immodest to go about with nothing on but a halo.

In connection with this subject, I am gratified to inform you that my ancient antagonist, Mr. O. Nick has come to my assistance and offered to supply the places of the strikers with a number of Salvation Army instrumentalists he has on hand. This timely proffer of my Director of Torments has led me to consider the advisability of restoring him to favor and reinstating him in the office of archangel. I am the more constrained to take this course as I have my eye on a likely successor—no less a personage, in fact, than the oracle of a certain tabernacle in your neighborhood. This party has always manifested, even in his present position, a very commendable desire to keep up the heat of my furnaces, and I think he would enjoy roasting his friends, who are also my most inveterate calumniators.

Having been away for some time in other parts of my dominions, I am pleased on my return to find that, owing largely to the efforts of Freethinkers, many worthy persons on your little planet have begun to discredit the lies and abominations of the book called the Bible. I shall know how to reward those who so senselessly persist in ascribing to me the authorship of such vile writings as that book contains. My wrath is kindled against them, though I should perhaps add that Mr. Nick is exceedingly partial to Christians. His department, he states, would be in a depressed condition without them. Other races, of course, not knowing of his existence, I cannot conscientiously consign them to his care. By the way, what size halo do you take? I am having some specially constructed for Freethinkers.

In conclusion, allow me to observe, Hi tiddley hi ti, hi ti hi.

Yours,

J. HOVA,

Sole Proprietor and Boss.

P.S.—The surreptitious introduction of this ditty is, I believe, largely responsible for the strike in the orchestra. I am perpetually humming it myself.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Remember Lot's wife," said the parson. "Dash it, I've enough trouble with my own," said Mr. N. Pect.

"Who was it said 'It is not good for man to be alone'?" asked the religious examiner. "Daniel in the lion's den," was the prompt reply.

On ordering a dinner for some ministers of the Church the waiter inquired "High Church or Low Church, sir?" "What can that matter?" said the clergyman. "O worry important, sir. High Church more wine; Low Church more wittles."

Father (who wouldn't give his daughter a new hat)—"Good sermon, Sophy? What was the text?" Daughter—"I can't remember the words exactly, dad, but something to effect that if you have one spark of generosity in you water it well."

"Theo," said Sophy, "what's all this about Theosophy and precipitated letters?" And Sophy replied unto Theo, "I'm sure I don't know, but here comes your Fred and my Jack. I hope they'll precipitate some love letters over the garden wall." But pa overheard them, and exclaiming "My hat, ma!" precipitately precipitated himself upon the precipitate young man.

MISSIONARIES IN CHINA.

"A Shanghai Merchant" sends the following letter to the *Hong-Kong Telegraph*. It exhibits the self-sacrificing spirit of the missionaries who are now clamoring for war.

"I have been deeply interested in the correspondence about our friends of the foreign missions, and desire to add my mite to the discussion. I belong to Shanghai, where as you know we have had some trouble of late. The moment the rumor came that there was danger, the missionaries made a masterly retreat to our city. Before the troubles were over, they had drawn up claims for indemnity, and filed them in some instances with their consuls. Nearly all were outrageously extortionate, and a few were equivalent to highway robbery, pure and simple. Here is a sample, and one which was filed with General Jones of Chinklang:—

Fare of myself, wife, child, amah, and servant, Chinkiang to Shanghai and return	195
(It is really 80 dols.)	
Six weeks' board in Shanghai for ditto	720
(They were stopping with another missionary)	
Salary of myself and wife, for us to account for to our Mission Society	600
Incidentals and extras	175
Value of property left behind, probably all destroyed.....	3000
Injury to property taken with us	550
Damage done to our gospel work	600
Shock to my wife's feelings	5000
(We are willing to leave this amount to your discretion.)	
Shock to the nerves (same as above)	5000
Damage to our amah	75
	<hr/>
	15,915

[Please collect this as soon as possible.]

Is there a business man in Hongkong, who could equal much less surpass the above?"

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

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

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green-road: 7, Capt. Pfoundes, "Theosophy: is it True?" Admission free.
Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, W. Heaford, "Confucianism and Christianity." Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 11.30, Mr. Vining, "The Progress of Rationalism"; 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Evolution of the Devil."; music will precede the lectures. Monday and Saturday, at 8.30, social meetings.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30, debating class, "Elocution"; 7.30, H. Snell, "Womanhood—a Christmas Carol in Prose and Verse."

Deptford—Lecture Hall, High-street: 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Charles Dickens as a Social and Religious Reformer." Preceded by recitals and music.

Finsbury Park—Rock-street Hall, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road: 11.30, E. Stanley Jones, "Man and his Relations"; 7, Sam Standing, "The Story of Christmas." Admission free. Saturday, at 8, free social concert.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, J. M. Robertson, "Recent Attacks on Neo-Malthusianism" (admission free); 6.45, music; 7.15, J. M. Robertson, "The Whitewashing of Christianity" (3d., 6d., and 1s.).

Lambeth—New Nelson Hall, Lower Marsh: 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture; important meeting after lecture.

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Thomas Crisfield, "Hypnotism, Mesmerism, Clairvoyance—the Theosophic View Refuted."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Roadway, Plaistow: 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Gospel Tales." Thursday, at 8, open debate.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter-street: 7, E. Calvert, "History of the Shakespearean Drama."

Wood Green—Star Coffee Rooms, High-street: 7, Lucretius Keen, "The Conservation of Evil."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): 7.30, Toleman-Garner, "The People Perish for Lack of Knowledge."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, W. Heaford, "Pious Absurdities." Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Norrish will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, Mrs. Charles Watts, "An Hour with Col. Ingersoll—Mistakes of Moses."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: Touzeau Parris, 11.30, "Christian Symbols: their Origin and Meaning"; 2.30, "Theism, Atheism, and Pantheism"; 6.30, "Theism—a Criticism and Reply to Mrs. Besant."

Hull—Cobden Hall, School-street, Waltham-street: 6.30, musical evening.

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: Charles Watts, 3, "Religion without Theology"; 6.30, "Is Unbelief a Crime?" (both lectures free). Monday, at 8, Charles Watts, "Freethought in England and America."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden-street: 11, Tontine Society 3, discussion class; 7, Mr. Doeg, "In the Days of Herod the King" (Matt. ii.).

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 6.30, Lawrence Small, B.Sc., "Fallacy of Design Argument."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, H. Keppell's logic class, preliminary arrangements; 7, G. Selkirk, "What have Unbelievers Done for the World?"

Nottingham—The Rink, Goldsmith-street: G. W. Foote, 11, "Who Wrote the Bible?" 3, "The Way to Heaven"; 7, "The Follies of Theosophy."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, Mr. Smith will lecture.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 2.45, reading circle; 7, Mr. Holliday, "Secularism."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: Miss Ada Campbell, 3, "Heredity"; 7, "The March of the Gods."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 3, mutual improvement class, "Tobacco"; 7, business meeting. Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas-street: 6.30, S. R. Fox, "What Fabianism is."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Dec. 20, Glasgow; 27, Milton Hall. Jan. 7, Finsbury Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Dec. 20, and 27, Deptford. Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, Deptford; 31, Camberwell. Feb. 7 and 14, Deptford; 21, Reading; 28, Deptford.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Dec. 20, Chatham. Jan. 3, Lambeth; 10, Bethnal Green; 17, morning and evening, Battersea; 24, Lambeth. Feb. 7, Lambeth; 14, Chatham; 21, Westminster. March 6, Southampton; 20, Westminster.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Dec. 20, evening, Camberwell. Jan. 3, evening, Battersea; 10, evening, Finsbury Park; 14, Hall of Science; 17, Ball's Pond; 24, evening, Camberwell; 31, evening, Lambeth. Feb. 7, evening, Westminster; 21, evening, Camberwell. March 6, evening, Westminster; 20, evening, Camberwell. April 3, Southampton.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Dec. 20 and 27, Libra Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth-road, Stratford, London, E.—Dec. 20, Woolwich.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Dec. 20, morning, Finsbury Park; 27, evening, Westminster. Jan. 10, morning and evening, Battersea; 24, Ball's Pond. Feb. 21, Portsmouth.

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I am anxious to clear all the above out before Stock-taking at the end of December. All the readers of this journal who are open to buy either cloths or dress materials, will never have a better opportunity than this one of getting some really cheap goods. During the last fourteen days I have received forty-two orders from readers of the *Freethinker* for £1 parcels of the above; although I offered to return money in full for all goods not approved, I have not received either a complaint or a single parcel back; but, on the contrary, I have received quite a number of letters expressing the greatest satisfaction with the value of the goods.

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