

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

We have done with the kisses that sting,  
The thief's mouth red from the feast,  
The blood on the hands of the king,  
And the lie at the lips of the priest.

—A. C. SWINBURNE.

## SKY PILOTS.

THE authorship of the designation "sky pilot" is as unknown as that of the 'our gospels. Yet its origin is recent. It has only been in use for a few years, say ten, or at the outside twenty. Nobody knows, however, who was the first man from whose lips it fell. Probably he was an American, but his name and address are not ascertained. Surely this fact, which has thousands if not millions of parallels, should abate the impudence of religionists who ask "Who made the world?" when they do not know who made nine-tenths of the well-known things it contains.

Whatever its origin, the designation is a happy one. It fits like a glove. Repeat it to the first man you meet, and though he never heard it before, he will know that you mean a minister. For this very reason it makes the men of God angry. They feel insulted, and let you see it. They accuse you of calling them names, and if you smile too sarcastically they will indulge in some well-selected Bible language themselves.

There are some trades that will not bear honest designations, and the minister's is one of them. Call him what you please, except what he is, and he is not disquieted. But call him "sky pilot" and he starts up like Macbeth at the ghost of Banquo, exclaiming "Come in any other form but that!"

Go down to the seaside and look at one of those bluff, weather-beaten, honest fellows who know all the rocks and shoals, and tides and channels, for miles around. Call one of them a "pilot," and he will not be offended. The term is legitimate. It exactly denotes his business. He is rather proud of it. His calling is honorable and useful. He pilots ships through uncertain and dangerous waters to their destination. He does his work, takes his pay, and feels satisfied; and if you cry "pilot!" he answers merrily with a "what cheer?"

But "sky" in front of "pilot" makes all the difference. It makes the man of God feel like having a cold shower bath; then the reaction sets in and he grows hot—sometimes as hot as H—well, Hades. We are not going to swear if the parson does.

But after all, he is a "pilot" and a "sky" pilot. He undertakes to pilot people to Heaven. Let him board your ship and take the helm, and he will guide you over the Black Sea of Death to Port Felicity. That, at least, is what he says in his trade circular, though it turns out very differently in practice, as we shall see presently.

Let us first notice a great difference between the sea pilot and the sky pilot. The honest salt boards the ship, and takes her out to sea, or brings her into port. When the work is over he presents his bill, or

it is done for him. He does not ask for payment in advance. He neither takes nor gives credit. But the sky pilot does take credit and he gives none. He is always paid beforehand. Every year he expects a good retaining fee in the shape of a stipend or a benefice, or a good percentage of the pew rents and collections. But when his services are really wanted he leaves you in the lurch. You do not need a pilot to Heaven until you come to die. Then your voyage begins in real earnest. But the sky pilot does not go with you. Oh dear no! That is no part of *his* bargain. "Ah my friend," he says, "I must leave you now. You must do the rest for yourself. I have coached you for years in celestial navigation; if you remember my lessons you will have a prosperous voyage. Good day, dear friend. I'm going to see another customer. But we shall meet again."

Now, this is not a fair contract. It is really obtaining money under false pretences. The sky pilot has never been to Heaven himself. He does not know the way. Anyhow, there are hundreds of different routes, and they cannot all lead to the same place. Certainly they all start from this world, but that is all they have in common, and where they end is a puzzle. To pay money in such circumstances is foolish and an encouragement to fraud. The best way to pay for goods is on delivery; in the same way the sky pilot should be paid at the finish.

But how is that to be done? Well, easily. All you have to do is to address the sky pilot in this fashion—"Dearly beloved pilot to the land of bliss! let our contract be fair and mutual. Give me credit as I give you credit. Don't ask for cash on account. I'll pay at the finish. Your directions may be sound; they ought to be, for you are very dogmatic. Still, there is room for doubt, and I don't want to be diddled. You tell me to follow your rules of celestial navigation. Well, I will. You say we shall meet at Port Felicity. Well, I hope so; and when we do meet I'll square up."

Of course it may be objected that this would starve the sky pilots. But why should it do anything of the kind? Have *they* no faith? Must all the faith be on *our* side? Should they not practise a little of what they preach? God tells them to *pray* for their daily bread, and no doubt he would add some cheese and butter. All they have to do is to *ask* for it. "Ask and ye shall receive," says the text, and it has many confirmations. For forty years the Jews were among the unemployed, and Jehovah sent them food daily. "He rained down bread from heaven." The prophet Elijah, also, lived in the wilderness on the sandwiches God sent him—bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening. There was likewise the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of flour, which supported her and the man of God day by day without diminishing. These things actually happened. They are as true as the Bible. And they may happen again. At any rate they *should* happen. The sky pilots should subsist on the fruits of prayer. Let them live by faith—not *our* faith, but *their* own. This will prove

their sincerity, and give us some trust in their teaching. And if they *should* starve in the experiment—well, it is worth making, and they will fall martyrs to truth and human happiness. One batch of martyrs will suffice. There will be no need of what Gibbon calls “an annual consumption.”

The men of God pilot us to Heaven, but they are very loth to go there themselves. Heaven is their “home,” but they prefer exile, even in this miserable vale of tears. When they fall ill, they do not welcome it as a call from the Father. They do not sing “Nearer my God to thee.” We do not find them going about saying “I shall be home shortly.” Oh no! They indulge freely in self-pity. Like a limpet to a rock do they cling to this wretched, sinful world. Congregations are asked if they cannot “do something,” a subscription is got up, and the man of God rushes off to the seaside, where prayer, in co-operation with oxygen and ozone, restore him to health, enable him to dodge “going home,” and qualify him for another term of penal servitude on earth.

It appears to us that sky pilots, like other men, should be judged by their practice. If they show no belief in what they preach, we are foolish to believe in it any more than they do. It also appears to us that their profession is as fraudulent as fortune-telling. Many a poor old woman has been imprisoned for taking sixpence from a servant girl, after promising her a tall, dark husband and eight fine children; but men dressed in black coats and white chokers are allowed to take money for promises of good fortune in the “beautiful land above.” It further appears to us that the sky pilots should be compelled to come to a reasonable agreement before their trade is licensed. They should settle *where Heaven is* before they begin business. Better still, perhaps, every applicant for a license should prove that *some* human soul *has been* piloted to Heaven. Until that is done, the profession is only robbery and imposture. G. W. FOOTE.

#### THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS.

I HOLD that the gospels, in the utterances ascribed to Jesus, have as much the character of being a literary production as the epistles ascribed to Paul. If genuine utterances, this should not be; for spoken words accurately reported have a distinct character from written thoughts. Even speakers accustomed to writing use a different style in their speeches from that of their writings; while with those who have rarely or never written (as is supposed to have been the case with Jesus) the colloquial style is unmistakable. Compare Dr. Johnson's talk, as recorded by Boswell, with any of his works; or, better still, compare the recorded sayings of Mohammed with the Koran. About the utterances ascribed to Jesus there is a literary flavor. Let any reader compare the discourses put into his mouth in the gospel “according to” John with the first epistle ascribed to that fisherman, and they will see at once what I mean. The very turns of expression are the same. Jesus is made to say, “These things have I spoken that your joy might be full” (John xv. 11). The writer more naturally says, “These things write we unto you that your joy may be full” (1 John i. 4). Jesus is most unnaturally made to say, “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him”; while the epistle writer says most naturally, “he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him and he in him.” How unlikely that a man should say, “If God were your Father ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God.” But it is quite natural a writer should express his belief, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.” How inconceivable that any sane man should have

said, “Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.” How natural that a believer should write, “He that hath the Son hath life,” or “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.” While it appears mere vanity in a man to say with Jesus, “I have overcome the world”; “I am the way, the truth, and the life”; “All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers.” These and numerous other phrases bear evident traces of being the embodiment of the beliefs of after ages.

So impressed was Professor F. W. Newman with the phenomena to which I call attention that he wrote in his *Phases of Faith*, pp. 115-6:

“As the three first gospels have their family likeness, which enables us on hearing a text to know that it comes out of one of the three, though we perhaps know not which; so it is with the gospel and epistles of John. When a verse is read, we know that it is either from an epistle of John, or else from the Jesus of John; but often we cannot tell which. On contemplating the marked character of this phenomenon, I saw it infallibly to indicate that John has made both the Baptist and Jesus to speak as John himself would have spoken; and that we cannot trust the historical reality of the discourses in the fourth gospel.”

But the phenomena is not confined to John, who, it must be borne in mind, although admittedly writing fifty years after the death of Jesus, yet uses before his long discourses, so different from the Synoptics, the same expression, “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” as though he were a verbatim reporter. The other gospels equally bear evidence of literary manufacture. Look at the summary of Christian ethics known as the Sermon on the Mount, which is given, in part, in Luke as delivered from a plain. Schoettgen, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, and Rodrigues, in his *Sermon sur la Montagne*, have proved that every item of this famous sermon is found in Jewish writings. I contend that its very character and structure show that it is as much a literary collection as the Proverbs ascribed to Solomon, and that this sermon is strictly a written composition, never uttered orally at one time by any one man. It smacks neither of mountain nor plain, but of the study. Let us examine it a little. First, it is poetical—that is, not rhymed, but with the structure of Hebrew poetry. Dr. John Jebb, a great Greek scholar, conclusively proved this in his work on *Sacred Literature*. Some illustrations will be necessary to non-Greek readers. Hebrew poetry sometimes, instead of ending alike, as with our rhyme, began alike. Thus the sermon begins with repetitions of the word “Blessed.” Another characteristic is parallelisms in couplets, triplets or quatrains. Here are instances:

To him that asketh thee, give;

And to him that would borrow, turn not away.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged;

And with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.

Unto whomsoever much is given,

Of him shall much be required;

And to whom men have committed much,

Of him will they demand the more.

Or in triplets, thus:

But if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?

It is good for nothing thenceforth except to be cast out

And to be downtrodden under foot of men.

A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid,

Nor do men light a candle and put it under a bushel,

But on a lampstand, and it lighteth all in the house.

So let your light shine before men

That they may see your good works,

And glorify your Father who is in heaven.

It may be said Jesus was an improvisatore, who, in speaking, naturally “dropped into poetry,” like Silas Wegg. But the methods of improvisation are more simple than those of written poetry. One who improvised, for instance, would be pretty sure to say:

Ask and it shall be given unto you,

For everyone who asketh receiveth.

Seek and ye shall find;

For everyone who seeketh findeth.

Knock and it shall be opened unto you,  
For to every one who knocketh, it shall be opened.  
But Jesus is made to use the form more suitable to  
written composition :

Ask and it shall be given unto you,  
Seek and ye shall find ;  
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

For everyone who asketh receiveth,  
And everyone who seeketh findeth ;  
And to everyone that knocketh it shall be opened.

An improvisatore, if very far from humble and  
meek, might sing :

Come unto me, all ye who labor and are burdened,  
For my yoke is easy and my burden light,  
And I will give you rest ;  
And ye shall find rest unto your souls.  
Take my yoke upon you and learn of me,  
For I am meek and lowly in heart.

But Jesus is made to use the more involved literary  
artifice :

Come unto me, all ye who labor, and are burdened,  
And I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you and learn of me,  
For I am meek and lowly in heart ;  
And ye shall find rest unto your souls,  
For my yoke is easy and my burden light.

The Lord's Prayer is a chant, which is as much a  
composition as any of those in the Book of Common  
Prayer. I have given but a few illustrations out of  
many ; I have not confined my citations to the Sermon  
on the Mount, for the same features are found in  
other parts. Look, for instance, at that manifest  
forgery in Matthew xvi., in which Jesus puns on  
Peter's name and makes him head of a church which  
was not in existence. We find the triplet

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,  
And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in  
heaven,  
And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in  
heaven.

Was there ever more manifest the work of a writer  
bent on exalting the claims of his Church ? In  
the case of the Sermon on the Mount, we have the  
most satisfactory proof of its being a composition,  
from its being found scattered in other parts of the  
other gospels, and alleged to have been uttered with  
entirely different circumstances of time, place, and  
manner.

The parables offer another proof that the sayings  
ascribed to Jesus are strictly compositions. They  
are often so poetical and even obscure that the  
disciples are naturally represented as not understand-  
ing them and requesting an explanation. Let anyone  
attentively compare, for instance, the parable of the  
sower as reported in Matt. xiii., Mark iv., and Luke  
viii., he will find turns of expressions which conclu-  
sively prove either that the writers copied from one  
another, or borrowed from a common source. In the  
case of the parable of the fig-tree (Matt. xxiv., Mark  
viii., and Luke xxi.) we have such close verbal agree-  
ment that it is idle to suppose either narrative can  
have any pretension to be an original report. Mr. J. A. Froude, in his essay on "Criticism  
and the Gospel History," alluding to this coinci-  
dence of expression says : "Were the writers  
themselves with their closest friends and companions  
to swear that there had been no inter-communication,  
and no story pre-existing of which they had made  
use, and that each had written *bonâ fide* from his own  
original observation, an English jury would sooner  
believe the whole party perjured than persuade them-  
selves that so extraordinary a coincidence had  
occurred." It is significant, moreover, that, as Mr.  
Froude further remarks, whereas Jesus "must have  
spoken in the ordinary language of Palestine, the  
resemblance between the evangelists is in the Greek  
translation of them (the parables and discourses) ;

and how unlikely it is that a number of persons, in  
translating from one language into another, should  
hit by accident on the same expressions, the simplest  
experiment will show."

The conclusion that the writers copied from some  
earlier documents is borne out by the external evi-  
dence, the first witness to such writings being Papias,  
who states that Matthew wrote, not in the Greek, as  
is our gospel according to St. Matthew, but in the  
Hebrew tongue ; not a narrative, like the first gospel,  
but the *logia*, oracles, discourses or sayings. That in  
some cases these sayings gave rise to the narrative  
we may see from the absurd and derogatory story of  
Jesus cursing the fig-tree, which evidently grew from  
the parable referred to. But the question of the  
composition of the gospels is too large to be dealt  
with in a single article, and I propose to return to the  
subject.  
J. M. WHEELER.

## WHY SHOULD THE ATHEIST FEAR TO DIE ?

(From the "Liberator.")

THE Bible is a funny book, when rightly understood ;  
and of all its funny texts there is not one more funny  
than Hebrews ix. 27 : "It is appointed unto men once  
to die, but after this the judgment." In any other  
case it would be regarded as an act of madness to  
judge corpses, or dead people ; but in religion nothing  
is ridiculous so long as you believe. The Egyptians  
did judge the dead man and assign him his portion  
afterwards. And the Bible but echoes that absurd  
custom.

The superstitions about death and after are  
extremely various, but all run upon the blind assump-  
tion that dead men are living men ; that though they  
are dead, they still live ; that, in fact, death is not  
death, but a mere phase in one's history—not death,  
but something else as different as possible. And if  
that is true, it seems to me we ought to alter our  
language ; and probably we should do so, but here  
the difficulty begins. What shall we call this some-  
thing we have all along called death ? What appro-  
priate name shall we give to it ?

As no two persons are exactly agreed on that  
subject, we shall probably have to use the old word  
for some time to come. And probably doctors,  
coroners, undertakers, grave-diggers, lawyers and  
legatees, widows and widowers, will still proceed to  
treat dead people as if the said dead people were  
dead in earnest, not joking and playing or shamming  
dead, as some people seem to be inclined to believe.

If dead people are still alive, they should be required  
to pay their debts all the same, and perform their  
duties, just as if nothing had happened, and not sling  
all their work over on other people, and loaf about,  
as they seem to do and have done for a good many  
thousands of years.

Human imagination plays tricks with its owners  
and imposes upon them at every step. It idealises  
things, and it dreams, too, both when we wake and  
when we sleep. It has created and elaborated a  
dream-world, a dream-universe, a poetical and im-  
possible region, the very compound ghost of this.  
That universe is divided into worlds and lands,  
palaces, parks, pleasure-grounds ; "regions of sorrow,  
doleful shades ;" lands of light lit by some ghostly  
sun and moon and stars ; and lands totally destitute  
of all light and beauty.

Into this dream-universe men have dreamt all the  
elements and characters of this actual world—its  
geography, nations, governments, institutions, occu-  
pations, offices, etc. And there, too, rewards and  
punishments are disbursed by properly constituted  
authorities.

Now and then people pass to and fro from the  
one world to the other, generally in dreams, but  
sometimes bodily. Now and then a foreigner comes  
to us with a message from dreamland, and goes

off again as if in haste or afraid to be too closely questioned.

In a few cases men of good nerve have gone to that dreamland, and returned all right, and others have taken up their abode there and never returned. It is a curious fact, that few who have made the journey tell us what they saw or experienced there. Like Hamlet's father's ghost, some of them "could a tale unfold," but they don't. The reason for this silence is very plain. The previous superstition creates the journey; and the previous superstition forbids any meddling with or adding to the old doctrine and belief—it is unlawful, wicked, abominable for anyone to know more than the priests, and damnable blasphemy to pretend he does. Consequently, none of the old voyagers to hell brought us any news; they were not a whit the wiser than before—in fact, they merely went to confirm the previous superstition, not to make discoveries.

It is a matter of real amusement to note the fact that, though Jesus was quite glib upon the subject of hell, and ever ready to scatter threats of it amongst his enemies, he never mentioned the subject after going there! The creed says, he descended into hell. And after that he, like Hamlet's Father's Ghost, held his peace upon the matter, never whispered it afterwards. Whether he received a caution from Nicholas, I cannot say; but this I know, he held his peace—if Christian records of the holiest renown can be credited.

The thing comes to this, then, so far as I am able to perceive:—All that is said about death and after is said by people without experience; the countries of the dead are described by those who never saw them nor ever conversed with denizens thereof. Those who are reported to have gone there have related nothing we did not know as well before they went.

And this want of evidence and information no doubt gave rise to the many conflicting theories and "views" and superstitions respecting it. Dreamland can be explored only by dreamers; and as each dreamer must be left to dream his own dreams, and as dreams repudiate time, space and reason, we must not be surprised if we find it difficult to translate dream-lore into that of everyday life. This world throws a flood of light upon dreamers and dreamland; but dreamland and dreamers reflect no light upon this world, nor ever make one fact the clearer.

Hence it is that in one land one thing is feared in dreamland, in another another. Dreams are not particular, until they are adopted as creeds and made to pass for sober truth, for the advantage of their owners.

As I say, there is great diversity of dread amongst those who believe in dreams—one fears this, another that, though each is positive he is in danger of realising his own dream, usually an adopted one, but feels no dread of another man's. No man fears another man's god, or dreads another man's devil, or expects to go to another man's hell.

Probably no reader of mine has the slightest fear of Abambou. Why? You were not trained to fear him in early life. Had you been born and reared among the African Chammas, you would have dreaded Abambou, as Christians dread Jehovah, Jesus and Satan. The Chammas, on the other hand, dread their own devil, but, until they are corrupted and led astray from their own primitive and infallible creed by missionaries, they no more dread the Christian God and Devil than they do their own thumb-nails.

I am probably correct in assuming that you do not in the least dread Samiulo; probably some of you may never have seen the name till now. But in Fiji this terrible god or devil used to hurl the souls he caught into a huge fire. Had we been properly trained in Fijian theology and submitted to the divine workings of the holy ghost who resides among

that people, we should have lived and died in mortal dread of Samiulo and his fire—things the Christians are blasphemous enough to laugh at as figments of the imagination, or corruptions of "primitive faith" delivered to our father Adam and mother Eve, of nursery tale celebrity.

The poor negro slaves in the West Indies, as they dug in mines and roasted in the sun on the plantations, dreamt of Africa, the home they had left; and killed themselves in great numbers, with the full persuasion that, as dead men, they should return to Africa and enjoy their freedom once more. The planters, fearing this new religion, or new phase of the old one, might rob them of all their slaves, hit upon a clever but cruel dodge to put a stop to suicides. They brought ropes in plenty and advised the slaves to hang themselves as fast as possible, "for," said the cunning rogues, "we have started a big plantation in Africa, and want as many negroes as we can get there; and our men are waiting for all who hang themselves to catch and make them work as soon as they get to Africa. So make haste, for we are in want of hands there."

The negroes devoutly believed this new gospel, on the same or similar evidence which serves most Christians; and they ceased to kill themselves lest they might migrate from the frying-pan to the fire.

It is all very well to laugh at negro theology, but no theology was ever better founded, ever more literally exact. The only thing wanting was some one suicided who had really crossed the ocean and returned to the West Indies with just the information they required. But here again, Christians are no better off—they too need, for the establishment of their faith, that some one shall go to dreamland and return with authentic news of the place. And when they have this we are prepared to hope or tremble as the evidence may require.

Probably I should waste my strength in vain, if I tried to frighten the Christians with the gospel of Osiris and his terrible avengers. He is king and judge in dreamland, judge of souls, who decides the fate of all human ghosts that come before him. He once lived on earth and did good to men; but the wicked Typhon, own brother as he was—just as Jesus and Satan are brothers, both sons of the same father, if not of one mother—Typhon, I say, killed Osiris, and he became judge of the dead. The Egyptians trembled before this dead man, and mended their manners when death approached, and got ready to meet the inexorable judge in dreamland as they best might. And then, when they shuffled off the mortal coil, they passed to his tribunal to receive the things done in the body, whether they were bad or good.

But what every Egyptian, every right-thinking Egyptian, as prigs and bigots now say, regarded as the most solemn and undeniable truth, the Christians regard as heathenism, darkness of pagan lands, not yet enlightened by the gospel, etc. In fact, every believer is infallibly right, and all those who differ must unquestionably be wrong. And so long as that feeling prevails reason and common sense will not stand much chance of prevailing.

However, the point to which I direct attention is this, I presume no Christian will say an Atheist ought to dread death because any of the above judges or monsters threaten him when he is dead. They do not fear those avenging deities, and do not call upon the Atheist to fear them.

The same must be said of Yama, the judge of the dead in India, Macus, Minos, Rhadamanthus, Plato, and many others. The world has left those fables behind, and, under their old names, no one at present believes in them or trembles lest he should fall into their hands.

The Christian, who does not understand the Atheist,

might help himself to do so by calling to mind the ancient dread that once prevailed amongst most nations respecting imaginary gods and devils, who were said to punish the wicked in dreamland after death; and then reflect how completely we have all outgrown those wretched and tormenting beliefs. The Atheist feels just the same towards the Christian beliefs as the Christian feels respecting the superstitions above named. The Atheist and the Christian both know that the old beliefs prevailed because people were too little enlightened to understand their true nature.

The Atheist, however, steps on a few paces further and treats the Christian superstitions just as he does all the rest, most impartially laying them all aside, as destitute of reality, as shadowy, earthly dreams projected into the future, as foolish and groundless expressions of what people hope and fear will be their fate after death. "The baseless fabric of this vision" is the same everywhere, whether called Pagan or Christian; and the Atheist finds it as impossible to accept it under one name as under another. And so far, we see no reason why the Atheist should fear death.

JOSEPH SYMES.

### WILL THEY TAX CHURCHES?

The *Daily News* attributes the success of the Progressive party in the recent London County Council elections to the essential reasonableness of the program which seeks to subject the landlords to municipal taxation. The *Daily News* emphatically maintains that "all forms of property should contribute equally to local burdens," and says that it cannot be doubted that a Liberal Parliament will give the London County Council the power it seeks.

We shall see how far principle will carry the County Council in this matter. If "all forms of property should contribute equally to local burdens," then it is clear that churches and chapels should be taxed like all other buildings. Will the County Council impartially support a principle which the *Daily News* lays down as almost axiomatic? We may feel sure that it will not so much as hint at such a thing. It will not ask Parliament to abolish religious exemption from taxation. Neither will it seek to secure a similar exemption for Secular halls, or hospitals, or Board schools, or almshouses. The *Daily News* would eat its own words and principles a thousand times over rather than apply them to religious edifices or the ground-rents of chapels. Yet the favored class of property is exempt from both local and imperial burdens, while in all ordinary cases rates and taxes on the full value of the land and building are paid either by the tenant or by the landlord, who also pays an imperial income-tax on the revenue he receives from land and houses. The only reform contemplated seems to be a transfer of the burden of taxation from tenant to landlord; and as in the case of almost all the smaller classes of houses the landlord already pays the whole of the rates and taxes (recouping himself, of course, in the increased rent), the transfer will be a mere farce so far as the great bulk of the Progressive householders are concerned, and in other cases will only result in a readjustment of rent as soon as existing agreements expire.

As a matter of principle, the equal taxation of all ground values and landed property is perfectly clear and simple; but it will not secure votes. It would affect the Progressives as well as their opponents. The County Council will accordingly ignore principle as a matter of course whenever religion appears on the scene, and will not even attempt to lighten the burden of taxation by making religious bodies pay their share of the rates.

If Secularists came into power and were to exempt Secular halls from taxation while taxing churches and chapels to the full, the religious world would

perceive the injustice of such a policy. But it is blind to its own injustice, and will of course always remain so while it can command enough votes to turn the balance against any party that might seek to deprive religion of its unjust privileges.

W. P. BALL.

### SANCTIMONIOUS IKE.

His quiet ways an' honest look  
Won all the diggin's at the start;  
His blue eyes seemed an open book  
In which we read his guileless heart.  
He first showed up at Placer Mound  
Jes' after that big '80 strike,  
An' unobtrusive loafed around,  
All unconcerned an' quiet like.

Some thought he war a millionaire  
From Frisco, lookin' up a snap,  
Whilst others said he had the air  
Of some revival gospel chap.  
The boys soon tied him to the name  
Of "Reverent Sanctimonious Ike,"  
Jes' cause he played the pious game  
So unconcerned an' quiet like.

He nursed the sick: spoke words o' cheer  
To them as 'ras'led with despair,  
An' at the bed o' pain you'd hear  
His low, sad voice in earnest prayer.  
No matter whar distress war found,  
You'd see that Sanctimonious Ike,  
Jes' like an angel movin' round,  
All unconcerned an' quiet like.

One night the safe, in which war kept  
The dust of all the men in camp,  
War busted open while we slept,  
By some durned, ornery, thievin' scamp.  
We took the trail amazin' quick,  
An' soon struck Sanctimonious Ike,  
Leadin' a pack mule down the creek,  
All unconcerned an' quiet like.

We found the stuff, a jedge was chose,  
An' thur beneath a jackoak tree,  
The court convened, an' w'en it rose,  
We took the back trail quietly.  
As up the mountain side we clim,  
We took a back'ard glance at Ike,  
A hangin' from a jackoak limb,  
All unconcerned an' quiet like.

CAPT. JACK CRAWFORD.

### CIGARS IN HEAVEN.

Strangely enough, his name notwithstanding, the witty Dominican monk, Bacco, had a great dislike to tobacco, and when once preaching to a crowd of Spanish sailors, he astonished them by telling them that there were no Spanish saints in Heaven. A few, he said, had been admitted, but they smoked so many cigars that they made the Holy Virgin ill, and Saint Peter set his wits to work to get them out. At length he proclaimed that a bull fight would be held outside the gates of Paradise. Thereupon, every Spanish saint, without exception, ran off to see the fight, and Saint Peter immediately closed the gates, and took care never again to admit another Spaniard.

A little girl who had been very ill was so far recovered as to be able to go out a little. One fine day she asked her mother if she might go into the garden for a short time, and permission was granted, on condition that she should not eat any of the fruit, as it might make her ill again. When she returned, her mother was very much grieved to see her apron stained with the juice of the fruit; so, in rather an angry manner, she said: "I thought I told you not to eat any fruit; you are a very naughty girl." "Yes, mother," sobbed the little girl, "but Satan tempted me!" "Then why did you not say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan?'" So I did, mother, and he got behind me, and pushed me right into the currant bushes!"

## INCUBI AND SUCCUBI.

The Jews accepted the text concerning the sons of God and daughters of men (Gen. vi. 1) as proving that fruitful intercourse could occur between spiritual and human beings, and they had their legends of the evil spirit Lilith, the first wife of Adam, who bore to him the innumerable multitude of demons. The anthropomorphic mythology and hero-worship of Greece consisted of little else, and the name of Satyr has passed into a proverb. The simpler and purer Latin Pantheon had yet its Sylvens and Fauns, who, as St. Augustine tells us, "are commonly called Incubi." The medical faculty in vain explained the belief by Ephialtes, or nightmare, and recommended for it belladonna rather than exorcisms. The belief grew still more definite as perfected processes of trial enabled judges to extort from their victims whatever confessions they desired, such as that of Angele de la Barthe, who, in the Toulousain in 1275, admitted that she had habitual intercourse with Satan, to whom, seven years before, at the age of fifty-three, she had borne a son—a monster with a wolf's head and a serpent's tail, which she fed for two years on the flesh of year-old babies whom she stole by night, after which it disappears; or that of the witches of Arras in 1460, who were brought to confess that their demon lovers wore the shape of hares, or foxes, or bulls. Innocent VIII. asserts the existence of such connections in the most positive manner; and Silvester Prierias declares that to deny it is both unorthodox and unphilosophical, and could only be prompted by sheer wantonness.—*H. C. Lea, "History of the Inquisition,"* vol. iii., p. 384.

## ACID DROPS.

Dr. Pierson, who is preaching at Spurgeon's Tabernacle and will probably continue to do so, at least for the next five years, is receiving a stipend of £1,200 per annum. 'Tis a good round sum. £100 a month. Probably more than found its way into Cashier Judas's bag during the thirty-six months of J. C.'s ministry. How the times have changed. And how the game pays now in comparison with the first start.

We look forward with interest to the Spurgeon probate. It is rumored that the great preacher died worth a good deal more than his Savior. Of course the rumor may be false. But it cannot be denied that Spurgeon lived well. Whether he "entered heaven at 11.5 on Sunday evening," January 31, or not, his lines were cast in pleasant places in this vale of tears. He had a splendid mansion and lovely grounds, and live-stock that equalled the Queen's at Windsor; his carriage and pair would have done credit to a duke, and he smoked A1 cigars—none of your queer Laranagas, seven for a shilling. Altogether the oracle of Predestination and Everlasting Hell enjoyed himself while his chance lasted. He found, of a truth, that godliness is great gain—and damnation still greater.

There was a very curious inscription on one of the coffins at the funeral of the five victims of the Rainhill tragedy.

Jesus Christ called a Little Child  
Martha Deeming  
Aged two years  
Unto Him.

This "call" from Jesus Christ took the form of a diabolical murder. The poor little thing was slaughtered by her own father. This is what the Rainhill sentimentalists describe as a "call" from Jesus.

Prophet Baxter backed out of the proposition of Mr. G. Ward, to make a deed assigning his property to charities in May, 1901, in the event of the world not coming to an end, as predicted, in April of that year. But he has himself been preparing for the event by selling his Swiss milk factory for £4,000 to a company that has come to grief through the transaction. No doubt he would do other business on similar favorable terms. The *Christian Herald* is a good property, and we expect Prophet Baxter would want a tidy sum for Bethshan his home for faith-healing at Drayton Park.

Prophet Baxter sold the property and good will of that little business of his to the Alpine Condensed Milk Company (Limited). But the milk is no longer in the coccoanut. The price was £4,000, in May 1891. Now the affair is

in bankruptcy, and is valued at £800. The chairman of the Company tells the shareholders and creditors that "no doubt the Rev. Mr. Baxter" would shell out the difference or "be pleased to make a compromise." "If he is so pleased," the *Star* financial man says, "he will be like no other clerical prophet it has been our fortune to meet."

The Rev. W. J. Jenkins, late vicar of Fillingham, Lincolnshire, is a bankrupt whose discharge is refused because he will not devote even £40 a year out of his allowance of £150 a year from the bishop.

The Cumberland quarryman, who shot his landlady through the head because his breakfast was not to his liking, was hung on Tuesday morning. He was all along quite unconcerned. Nevertheless the chaplain seems to have wafted him to glory. The murderer took a hearty last breakfast, and afterwards *the sacrament*. He died with his God inside him. His landlady was less fortunate.

Had the Education Bill passed in Germany in its original form, it would have given the Catholic priests such a position of power over education as they enjoy in no European country, even in Spain, and they are wild at the likely frustration of their object. If the country is appealed to there is little doubt it will express itself plainly against this reactionary project which has been forwarded through the intrigues of priests, and in the interests of the churches. At present the Catholics have a solid vote of 109 out of 394, and holding the balance of power, they have sought to dictate their own terms.

They are still suffering from want of rain in Bengal. The ground is parched and scorched throughout India, and seed cannot be sown as usual. The Lord arranges these matters badly.

Over one million three hundred thousand pounds was subscribed in Great Britain last year to give the heathen a better chance of damnation by rejecting the blessed gospel. Yet there are thousands at home devoid of the decencies, and even the necessaries, of life.

A cock and bull infidel death-bed story, which has done much duty in America, is that which relates how Col. Ethan Allen, on his death bed, requested his daughter to follow the religion of her mother. Col. Allen was one of the heroes of the war of Independence, and a statue is erected to him at Montpelier, Vermont. He died in 1789.

Griswold in his *Curiosities of American Literature*, tells the oft-repeated story and then says: "This is a very pretty anecdote, but not a single sentence of it relates to any actual occurrence. The hero of Ticonderoga never lost a daughter during his own lifetime, and his wife was not a pious woman; at least, she pretended to have experienced no religious influences. The falsity of the story, which has found its way into histories and into hundreds of printed collections of memorabilia, was asserted to us by the excellent daughter of the hardy chief, who yet survives, and who perhaps was the heroine of the tale." Yet the lie is still considered good enough for Sunday-school children.

The man David who was executed at St. Nazaire for the murder and robbery of two elderly women, made a speech from the scaffold to 10,000 spectators. As usual he thanked God that he was going to meet his namesake in the realms of bliss, and promised to meet his confessor and the priests in heaven.

A certain Somers Town preacher, of the Presbyterian persuasion, has informed Miss Vance that he is willing to discuss Atheism with Mr. Foote. He also lays down a long list of conditions, all of which *must* be complied with. Mr. Foote has told Miss Vance that he is willing to discuss Atheism with the preacher if he will also discuss Christianity, and that the conditions could be settled by a joint-committee. This, however, the preacher declines. He wants all his own way or nothing. Or rather, he doesn't want a debate at all, but an opportunity of swaggering safely.

The Rev. John McNeil, who has gone back from London to evangelise his fellow Scotsmen, has a singer named Duke,

who, he says, "plays Sankey to my Moody." He adds the burden of their song is always the same, "Come to Jesus, come to Jesus." The Rev. John is a Presbyterian, pledged to the belief in predestination. He and his singer ought to add to their song the reminder that, if not elected from all eternity, they cannot come, and will infallibly be damned, even though they try to come.

There is an awful liar called Grinstead knocking about at Bristol. He does a bit of preaching and runs a little monthly budget called the *Bristol Messenger*. In the March number of this wonderful publication there is a long article entitled "The Saying of a Fool"—and really it is the saying of a fool. But the fool is more than a fool, and the alteration is for the worse. He rolls out that old chestnut about the Atheists who challenge God to prove his existence. "A female orator," he says, "on one occasion had challenged God to strike her dead that moment as she stood upon the platform; and because God had not done so, she and some other foolish people had assumed there could be no God."

That is pretty stiff. But the veracious Grinstead didn't stop there. He went on and gave himself away. "A friend of mine," he says, "got up and said," etc., etc. Then he begins to address himself to "honest doubters."

Now then, J. Grinstead, just give the name of the "female orator," the time and place of "the occasion," and the name and address of your "friend." We call upon you to do this. But you won't. You can't. You have borrowed an old lie and dished it up with your own sauce. Yet you wonder how the story of the Resurrection could get circulated if it wasn't true!

*Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*, of Madrid, calculates that the yearly expense for religion in Spain is above one million five hundred thousand reals. It says further that every hundred Spaniards have to support ten parasites, who live by prayers and the practice of all kinds of knavery. Meanwhile the country is kept in a backward state for want of developing its natural resources. Thieves and stabbing affrays are common, and the priests live well through the vice and ignorance of the people.

It is now just two hundred years since the pious Puritans of New England, under the Rev. Cotton Mather, broke out into furious persecution against witches in Salem, and imprisoned, tortured, and executed their victims as remorselessly as any member of the Inquisition.

A correspondent writes: "This little story may not be very funny; but it at least has the common merit of being true. The four-year-old daughter of a certain Freethinker overheard a Roman Catholic cousin singing hymns. The child afterwards said to her mother, "Did you hear Jenny singing the wicked word that daddy uses when he hurts his finger?" "No," replied the mother; "what was it?" After a long pause the child answered, in an impressive whisper—"Christ."

It is said the matchless quack, whose name is Booth, is going to send over wives for Australians! What do Australian spinners say to this? Pity he did not preach that gospel while here. He might have been honored with tar and feathers for his pains.—*Liberator*.

Thomas Nicholson, parson of St. John's Vicarage, Sunderland, is sending cadging circulars to persons who have no connexion with the Church of England. He wants to clear off a debt of £558 13s. 2½d., and to devote his time and energy to "spiritual work." Why doesn't he try prayer? Jesus Christ promised the saints that they should have all they asked for. The only condition was believing they would get it. That's easy enough, anyhow, and Parson Nicholson should for once practise what he preaches.

The Paris correspondent of the *Catholic Times* reports the miraculous cure of a young lady at the shrine of Notre Dame de Rocamadour. No names and addresses of witnesses are given, and the young lady is referred to by initials. These stories are a good deal like those of converted infidels, got up in the interests of priests.

A priest was sent for, in haste to christen an infant whom

it was supposed would not live. The priest was away, and so Pat Murphy, who lived next door, volunteered to perform the ceremony. Taking some water and making the sign of the cross, he said, "In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the"—then scratching his head for a while, he muttered, "Faith an' I forgit the name of the other gentleman!"

The *Jewish World* says that in Silesia there has just occurred a parallel to the story of Jephthah. A workman in a Silesian village was suffering from influenza, and resorted to a wise woman or witch for the means of cure. She told him to take a stout sapling and give a good drubbing to the first old woman he met. He followed her advice, though it happened that the first person he met was his own mother. The old lady didn't see the virtue of this new influenza cure, and had her son arrested and imprisoned for fourteen days.

William Herdy, a deacon in the church of Rev. John Calvin, a Methodist minister, of Green County, Alabama, accused Calvin of being intimate with his (Herdy's) wife, and attacked him with a cane. The preacher drew a pistol and killed Herdy, and was arrested.

Says Wong Chin Foo: "In most large cities in China where the Christian missionaries have not yet visited or made their homes, benevolent families have large tanks of hot tea placed daily upon the sidewalks for the poor, and there are no tickets or any other red-tape business attached to the thing either, as in Christian institutions, as I have seen it done upon the Bowery in New York. During the winter months scores and hundreds of rich families in Shanghai, Yung Chow, and in fact all the large cities of heathenish persuasion, would dole out brand new suits of warm clothing almost as free as their tea and rice to the needy poor; and such was their confidence in their fellow-men that whoever applied for them would get them."

Sunday base-ball playing is extending in the States. The most influential clubs in the Base-ball League have fixed matches for Sunday. The bigots in Kentucky are alarmed, and have presented a Bill to the State Legislature to prohibit Sabbath games. Let us all be unhappy on Sunday.

Mr. Pratt Wills, the secretary of the bankrupt Portsea Island Building Society, who is charged with misappropriating funds to the extent of over thirty thousand pounds, and thereby ruining hundreds of the most frugal of his fellow citizens, is a very pious person. Some time ago he discovered that a young lady, who is now a prominent member of the N. S. S., had heretical views, and procured her dismissal from her post as governess. This same worthy was recently correspondent in a divorce case, and adjudged to pay heavy damages. He stated to his assistant secretary that he is quite resigned to his fate. "He has made his peace with God, and they could do what they liked with his body." Mr. Pratt Wills will make a worthy companion for Jacob, David, and the other elect of God.

The Rev. Henry Powell, of Bayswater, shot himself through the chest and temple for reasons unknown. He has never been suspected of "infidelity."

The Rev. A. S. Herring, vicar of St. Paul's, Peartree-street, Goswell-road, puts out big posters advertising his price for marriage banns 1s. 6d., ceremony 9s. 6d.; also that there will be a "Large Public Baptism" in the Herring tank on Easter Thursday, when children will be baptised free gratis. No doubt many in his neighborhood would be better for a dip. Cannot the Rev. Mr. Herring be prevailed upon to throw in a little soap?

The Rev. F. Baggally, vicar of Holy Trinity, Weymouth, has excited some indignation by his refusal to allow the Salvationists to bury a dead soldier of their "army" in the parish burial ground, which was provided a few years since by public subscription.

Jay Gould, the American millionaire gave 10,000 dols. to the New York Presbyterian Church, of which he is a member, and his daughter a leading saint. The Rev. Dr. Rainsford protested against taking money from "a man who had done more to degrade and debauch the morals of business than any other citizen." Mr. Jay Gould thereupon gave twenty five thousand dollars to the University

of New York, which, it is expected, will not look their gift horse in the mouth.

General Booth emphatically condemns the policy of the missionaries and the Government in educating the natives of India. He sees it helps to make them Freethinkers. He says the "B.A.'s" are becoming a positive plague like the locusts. What the people of India want is not education, but blood and fire banners, with plentiful beating of the tom-tom.

Here is one of the S. A. placards used at Leeds: "War! War!! War!!! One week's heavy firing! Salvation Army Barracks, North-street. Proclamation. Free Pardon! The King of Kings hereby offers free pardon to all the slaves of sin, if they will give up serving the Devil and trust in the blood of Christ, and join in the fight against Old Nick! Any person refusing pardon on these terms will, on the Judgment Day, by command of the King, be turned into hell for ever." Join in the fight against Old Nick means join the S. A. Heaven is for us, and hell for all the others.

The *Bristol Christian Leader*, a monthly magazine, contains a portrait and biographical sketch of the Rev. J. Moffat Logan, who recently debated with Mr. Foote. Mr. Logan appears to be a Glaswegian, and at one time he is alleged to have been a Freethinker. We are even told that he "went about opposing Christians by every means in his power." Do any of our Scottish friends remember Mr. Logan in that rôle? For some time, as a Christian minister, he was stationed at Halifax, and he boasts of having destroyed the N. S. S. Branch there. If this be true (we are not denying it, only we never heard of it before) our Halifax friends will be able to tell us all about it.

Mr. Logan is also stated to have "three times crossed swords with Mrs. Besant," and to have had "bouts" with Charles Bradlaugh and other Secular lecturers. Where and when? We should be glad to know.

The *Christian Leader* gives an account of the Logan-Foote debate—of course from a party point of view. Of that, however, we do not complain; it is inevitable; and perhaps the report is as fair as could be expected.

On one point the writer falls into the same mistake as Mr. Logan fell into during the debate. Mr. Foote said he did not know how Paul could call Jesus the first fruit of them that slept if a wholesale resurrection of saints took place at the crucifixion. Mr. Logan replied that their resurrection was after the resurrection of Jesus. But the text does not say so. It only says that they came out of their graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city. Their graves were opened by the earthquake, said to have happened during the crucifixion, and "many bodies of the saints which slept arose." There is a comma after "arose," in our English version of Matthew, which Mr. Logan and his friends have overlooked.

Nor does this end the matter. Apart from those "saints" no less than three persons were raised from the dead by Jesus—the widow's son, the ruler's daughter, and Lazarus. In the case of Lazarus we are told that the corpse had begun to decompose. This was therefore an instance of resurrection from the dead before the death of Jesus. How then, even if we put the "saints" aside, could Jesus be the first fruit of them that slept?

One thing in the *Leader* report of the debate is amusing. The writer says the audience (of course he means the Christian portion of it) laughed at Mr. Foote's statement that Paul's "conversion" on the road to Damascus looked like "the effect of a thunderstorm or a sunstroke." As a matter of fact, Mr. Foote said nothing about "a thunderstorm." What he said was "a sunstroke or a miracle." No doubt this was a novelty to the Loganites, as the *Mercury* called them, but that was due to their ignorance of the literature of the subject. Mr. Foote did not invent the "sunstroke" theory. It has been often advanced, and it is very consistent with the story. If a man is stricken down under a Syrian sun, and loses his eyesight and appetite, it looks more like a sunstroke than a visit from "the blessed Savior."

By the way, what are the "patent" reasons why Mr. Logan declines a written debate. The only reason advanced by Mr.

Logan is that he does not wish to increase the circulation of the *Freethinker*. But there is no need to do that. The debate could be printed in book form without appearing in this journal. Neither disputant would be interrupted, and bad arguments would not be applauded by hot partisans. We made the offer in the interest of truth, but of course Mr. Logan is perfectly free to decline it; only he should not get his friends to talk about "patent" reasons that are somewhat difficult to discover.

Ministerial privileges are being curtailed in New England. At Laconia, New Hampshire, the Rev. J. N. Haines has to stand on his trial on a charge of administering kisses to divers ladies of his flock. The ladies of the church are all at sixes and sevens about the matter. Things have come to a pretty pass if the men of God cannot greet their sisters in the Lord with a holy kiss.

The Rev. R. F. Clarke, of the Society of Jesus, who writes *Scientific Jottings* in the *Kensington News* over the signature of "Mathetes," admits that something similar to Christian monasticism was indicated in the forest life of the old dwellers in India. He might have said that Christian monkery was anticipated almost in its entirety by the Buddhist monks of India and Thibet.

Catholic Austria leads the way in the returns of illegitimacy. Its proportion of children born out of wedlock is 14.89; Germany, mainly Protestants, has 9.47; "Infidel and immoral" France, 8.20, being exceeded by godly Scotland with 8.34; England and Wales only show 4.6, and Holland 3.22.

"Creed" is the religious name given to a large mining settlement in Colorado, where spiritual life mostly takes the shape of cocktails. The Rev. J. Gaston, of Ouray, recently went there and preached in the largest saloon in the camp. He took for his text "If a man dies shall he live again." No sooner had he given out these words than the 300 men shouted as with one voice, "Not in Creed."

The Rev. William Smethurst Naylor, curate of St. Andrew's, Burnley, has to hand over to Miss Douglas, of Prestwich, the sum of £300 as *solutum* for breach of promise of marriage. Some amusing and pious letters were read during the hearing of the case.

New Testament beliefs are illustrated in Patagonia, where doctors are known as "devil exterminators." When a child is ill, it is supposed to be possessed by a devil—whatever the disease may be—and the doctor comes, smears the sufferer with clay, and pops his patient into a tight skin bag. When this is closed he opens a similar receptacle, drops in some pebbles and serpents' teeth, and shakes it well to tempt the devil to jump in, finally dropping the bag into the nearest water. Then the sick child is released from its bag, thoroughly washed, and wrapped in the skin of some animal. Should it not recover, the doctor declares that two devils fought for the child, and only supernaturally endowed medicine men are able to cope with a legion of devils.

"Peter Lombard" writes from Jerusalem to the *Church Times*, that going to see the pool of Siloam he found a black hideous stream offensive to eye and nostril, where a woman was washing clothes. A good deal of the gilt would come off Jerusalem the golden if travellers told what they actually saw, and smelt.

Birmingham does not want a new bishop, or at any rate don't care to pay for the luxury. As the scheme cannot be brought to maturity, the secretary has had to repay subscribers the sums guaranteed, and, in the case of one large donation, with interest added.

Anthony Comstock, of the American Vice Society, of unenviable fame for the prosecution of D. M. Bennett and Moses Harman, has at last come to grief. In the recent decision in the case of C. N. Caspar, a Milwaukee bookseller, fined 500 dollars for sending objectionable literature through the mails, Judge Jenkins said: "There are some offences worse than the circulation of obscene literature. One of these is the practice of fraud and lying of which Anthony Comstock has apparently been guilty. Mr. Comstock may be able to reconcile his conduct with the laws of God and morality, but the court cannot do so."

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

*Sunday*, March 27, Hall of Science, Old-street, E.C., at 11.15, "The New County Council"; at 7.15, "Prayer and Providence."

*Tuesday*, March 29, Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road, E., at 8.30, "Why I Cannot be a Christian."

*Thursday*, March 31, Hall of Science, Old-street, London: at 8, "The Code of Christ."

April 3 and 10, Hall of Science; 17, Sheffield; 24, Hall of Science.

May 1, Glasgow.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.**—March 27, Birmingham. April 3, Manchester; 10 and 17, Birmingham; 24, Sheffield. May 1 and 8 (morning and evening) Hall of Science; 15 and 22, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

**L. D. H.**—It is a private matter. Sorry you took so much trouble in vain.

**J. ELSWORTH.**—The Bible says that all the highest hills under heaven were covered. There are mountains five miles high. Read the story in Genesis for yourself, also Mr. Foote's pamphlet on *Noah's Flood*.

**A. E. M.** says that a Salvationist exclaimed on Ramsgate beach "Why give fourteen pence a pound for lamb when you can get the lamb of God for nothing?" We have heard this "blasphemy" before.

**YOUNG ATHEIST.**—We did not say that Mr. Philip Wright was an Atheist. You must remember, however, that he may call himself a Secularist and be an Atheist too.

**W. R. THOMPSON.**—Your manly letter has given us great pleasure. We are proud to be President of a Society that has such sturdy members. May the Ebchester Branch flourish as it deserves! We hope to meet your members, personally, perhaps before the Conference, but certainly then.

**JOHN.**—The circular is "sickening," but of a very common type in religious circles. Wrestling with the Lord often pays well. When Jacob did it he got a blessing, which was all the other party had at the time.

**PUZZLED (Bristol).**—We are quite aware that those who make reason their guide sometimes fall into mistakes, and often differ from each other; in other words, man is not infallible. But what of that? Do not people who take the Bible as their guide make mistakes and differ from each other? Are not the various sects founded upon such differences? And has not reason this advantage, that in time it corrects the blunders of those who trust it?

**J. WHITE.**—It is not true that the N. S. S. allows "drinking, smoking, and card-playing at its meetings." The persons who told you so are deceived. We are tired of correcting the misrepresentation.

**W. M. KNOX.**—Shall appear.

**J. ELLIOT.**—You have simply to say "I wish to affirm." If the judge, magistrate, or coroner asks "On what ground?" you must reply either "I have no religious belief" or "The taking of an oath is contrary to my religious belief." The court is then bound by the Oaths Act to let you affirm. If you are refused or insulted, or both, communicate at once to Mr. Foote.

**R. D. TURNER.**—If you want to have a secular burial, when the time comes, arrange the matter with your relatives. If they will not comply with your wishes, send to Mr. Forder for a form, fill it in, return it to him, and it will be kept at the N. S. S. office. The document will authorise the specified person to bury you according to your desires. Parsons have no power to prevent people from being buried in their own fashion. They had the power once, but they have it no longer.

**H. APPERLEY.**—Pleased to hear you find the *Freethinker* the "most interesting and instructive paper" you have ever read. See paragraph.

**W. T. LEEKEY.**—An official circular from the trustees of the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund will be issued shortly. Then you can direct your subscription towards the Hall of Science scheme and also increase the amount. Thanks for cuttings.

**W. H. MAERS.**—Glad to hear the course of Free Lectures at Walthamstow has brought the Leyton Branch five new members. Your determination to carry on two open-air stations during the summer is a good sign of progress. Thanks for the successful promotion of the sale of this journal.

**S. H. AISON.**—Sorry to hear that you have resigned the secretaryship of the West Ham Branch, though pleased to know you will still "take an active interest in the cause." Kindly tell us, in confidence, your reasons for resigning. What is the "difference" you refer to?

**J. H.**—Josephus, the Jewish historian, was born at Jerusalem about A.D. 37. His father was a leading Pharisee and should have been in a position to know the alleged wonderful events in Palestine about that time. Josephus himself became

governor of Galilee and died A.D. 93. Philo, the Jewish philosopher, lived at the time assigned to Christ.

**R. O. SMITH**, hon. treasurer of the London Secular Federation, acknowledges:—W. Wheeler, 5s.; W. T. Leekey, 1s.

**H. W.**—The "sons of God" in Job were angels, gentlemen with seats in the upper circle. They are identical with the "sons of God" in Genesis who "saw the daughters of men that they were fair."

**VEGETARIAN.**—Mr. Foote is not at the Hall of Science on April 17. Mr. Parris occupies the platform that day. He is a very able man. By all means take your friends to hear him.

**W. H. M.**—See reply to J. Elliott as to affirmation. The matter is simple enough. You are doing a good work. Private persons can sow the seed of Freethought as well as lecturers and writers. Much may be done in conversation.

**R. J. MURRAY.**—"General Literature" is what the Yankees call a large order. We must know the special branch before we can advise—history, poetry, fiction, or what?

**CHATHAM SECULARIST.**—A fuller report would be necessary to found a criticism upon.

**W. HOLLAND.**—(1) Leaving the *Freethinker* in tramcars is sure to do some good. (2) Ships are called "she." They almost look like living beings when under sail, and sailors you know are males. Perhaps that's the reason.

**S. J. GRANT.**—Certainly the new Bristol Branch is a curious result of "infidel slaying." If the Christians are satisfied, we are.

**R. C. RYAN.**—In our next.

**PAPERS RECEIVED.**—Fritankaren—Truthseeker—Lichtfreund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Progressive Thinker—Cosmopolitan—Flaming Sword—Better Way—Echo—Ironclad Age—Lucifer—Crossbearer—Craven Herald—Manchester Telegram—Bristol Mercury—Star—Manchester Examiner and Times—Bristol Christian Leader—Western Daily Free Press—Bristol Evening News—Open Court—Modern Thought—Twentieth Century—Liverpool Daily Post—West Ham Herald—La Verité—Lo Bluet—Truthseeker—Natal Advertiser.

**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.

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

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote occupies the Hall of Science platform to-day (March 27). His morning subject is "The New County Council," his evening subject "Prayer and Providence." Prior to the lecture, in addition to the music, Mr. Foote will read George Meredith's "Juggling Jerry."

Mr. Charles Watts had a very hearty reception on Sunday at the London Hall of Science. He was in good form and excited great enthusiasm. This week Mr. Watts has been debating at Sheffield with our old opponent Dr. McCann. Some account of the debate will appear in our next issue.

Bethnal Green Freethinkers should bring their Christian friends and crowd the Libra Hall on Tuesday evening, when Mr. Foote lectures on "Why I cannot be a Christian." There is to be a charge for admission, and the proceeds will go to the Branch.

"The Mythical Christ" was the subject of Mr. Foote's second Thursday evening lecture at the London Hall of Science. Mr. Charles Watts took the chair, and there was a good attendance. After the lecture the Rev. F. Relton, of Chelsea, opposed on behalf of the Christian Evidence Society. The hour's discussion was followed with close attention. It was admitted that Mr. Relton bore himself like a gentleman. We hope Mr. Engstrom will be able to find as courteous an opponent for each of the remaining two evenings. "God the Son" is the subject for Thursday, March 24, and "The Code of Christ" for Thursday, March 31.

For some reason or other Mr. Foote's audiences at Wolverhampton were not so large as usual. Perhaps the change of date had a bad effect. The worst of it was, the parcel of literature did not arrive. It may have been running round England on an excursion, or snugly hiding until it *wasn't* wanted in some luggage office. Anyhow it was not available, and the special *Freethinker* article on the Rev. C. A. Berry (a local celebrity) was useless as far as Wolverhampton was concerned. Poor Mr. Wootton, the Branch secretary, was quite in the dumps. He went to the station so often to inquire about "that parcel" that the officials got to "see him coming."

On Monday evening Mr. Foote broke new ground at Warrington with a discourse on "Charles Bradlaugh." The meeting was organised by the Cheshire Branch, most of whose members live at Crewe. Six of them travelled the thirty miles or so to look after the business arrangements of the lecture. Mr. Fish came still further from Chester. All of them are working men! Surely *their* hearts are in the cause. Another visitor was Mr. Willock, the secretary of the Manchester Branch, who came over to see if arrangements could be made for a visit by Mr. Sam Standring. We hope he will soon go there and stir up the natives (they want it badly) with a rattling open-air lecture.

The *Freethinker* is going up in circulation at Warrington. Mr. Lewis reports the same at Crewe. Mr. Fish got a Chester newsagent to sell the paper, and guaranteed a dozen copies. That newsagent now sells three dozen weekly. Reader, why not take *your* part in getting newsagents to give the *Freethinker* a chance. We want no favor, but simply justice.

Mr. Sam Standring is delivering a course of Monday evening free lectures in the Manchester Secular Hall. Discussion is courted, and special facilities will be afforded to representatives of the local Christian Evidence Society.

We congratulate Dr. T. B. Allinson. He has been to gaol at last. The minions of the law took him to Holloway Prison (we know the shop) for wilful, obstinate, and persistent refusal to pay Church Rates. It happened last Thursday, March 17. The plucky doctor was booked for a month and settled down to enjoy the treat. But, alas, he was doomed to disappointment. A friend went and paid the rate and costs, and the doctor, who wanted to stop in Her Majesty's Holloway Hotel, was turned out by the people who dragged him in.

Dr. Allinson deserves the thanks of every Freethinker and every Dissenter. We hope his example will be followed by other ratepayers in Marylebone. It is simply infamous, at this time of day, that Church parsons should be allowed to sweat their neighbors. Let them earn their own living, or beg it, or borrow it, but don't let them steal it.

Mr. Holyoake has presented a complete set of all his works, including *The Reasoner* and books on Co-operation, to the Secular Union of Victoria, British Columbia. It is very difficult now to collect a complete set of the whole of Mr. Holyoake's publications, and it was thought that the collection might be a distinction in British Columbia. They were consigned to Mr. Simeon Duck, a well-known and esteemed citizen of Victoria.

Mr. A. B. Moss closes his Deptford campaign this evening (March 27) with a lecture on "The Triumph of Secularism." Lecture Hall, High-street, at 7.30. We hope there will be a good meeting.

The joint-committee of the Logan-Foote debate held a final meeting on Saturday evening. The sum of £43 2s. 11d. was found to be realised for the Bristol Children's Hospital. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. G. Dudderidge, the committee's chairman. Mr. Dudderidge, who is a sound Radical and liberal-minded on religion, thanked the Freethinkers for their courtesy, and hoped to meet them again some other day.

The South Shields Branch has done very little lecturing of late, in consequence of the Free Library Hall being monopolised by the Christians. They are now free to use it, however, and courses of special lectures will be delivered every month. Miss Campbell and Mr. Dipper take all the Sundays in April.

The Sunderland Branch is making another effort, and on Sunday night met at the Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street. It was decided to recommence the weekly meetings at the house on April 3, when Mr. Cooper, of South Shields, will be invited to lecture.

The Battersea Branch holds its quarterly Tea and Entertainment to-day (Sunday, March 27) at 5.30. Tickets, 6d. each, can be had at the hall or at outdoor meeting on Sunday morning. The quarterly meeting takes place at 3.30. All members should attend, likewise any Freethinker who wishes to join the Branch.

The Congress of the German Freethinkers' Union will take place in Erfurt in May. The reactionary measures of the Government demand increased union and activity among our German brethren.

In the *Open Court*, of Chicago, for March 3, Mr. M. D. Conway gives a translation of the Declaration of Rights drawn up by Thomas Paine and Condorcet, and submitted to the French Convention in 1793. Mr. Conway says the document has attracted no study, but it well deserves the attention of those interested in political philosophy. "It impresses me as far surpassing any other instrument of the kind known in European or American history."

Moncure D. Conway, in a lecture before the Philadelphia Ethical Society on a recent Sunday, said that Thomas Paine was the first advocate of the emancipation of the colored race, and his pamphlet on that question, published in April, 1775, was followed thirty-five days afterwards by the formation of an anti-slavery society. He sought to prevail upon his intimate friend, Thomas Jefferson, to have inserted an emancipation clause in the declaration of independence, but the plan was successfully opposed by slave-owners in the northern and southern States. It was he who penned the proclamation of emancipation in Pennsylvania, setting free all the people held in bondage in that State.

As founder and editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, he attacked the practice of duelling, denounced the ill-treatment of the brute creation, saying that "kindness to animals is faith in God," and eloquently urged the elevation of woman-kind. Although as a Quaker he would not resent a personal indignity, when the life of an infant republic was at stake he shouldered his musket in defence of this country.

The controversy of the ministers with Ingersoll in the *New York Evening Telegram* has had the good effect of bringing the Colonel out. We see that he lectured at the Broadway Theatre, New York, on March 6 on his old subject, Myth and Miracle.

A report in the *New York Press*, says Col. Ingersoll made his audience laugh itself into tears. Speaking of miracles, Ingersoll said: "The present insists on common sense. I say to a man to-day, 'Eighteen or twenty thousand years ago they raised men to life.' He replies, 'Yes, I know it.' I then say, 'Ten or twenty thousand hence they will raise them all.' He replies, 'I think so, too.' Then I say, 'I saw a man raised to life yesterday.' My friend replies, 'What asylum did you get out of?'"

Mr. Benjamin R. Tucker, the editor of *Liberty*, of Boston, is going to move his paper and publishing establishment to New York.

Captain Robert Adams, President of the Canadian Secular Union, has been interesting himself in a Bill to permit affirmation in Canada. He writes: "Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, M.P., Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, writes regarding the proposed Oaths Bill—'I am altogether with you on this question, and I will be glad if, as you say, the Government will countenance the measure.' Sir Donald A. Smith also writes a most cordial letter, and pledges himself anew to the hearty support of the Bill."

*Secular Thought*, of March 12, gives its readers a portrait and biography of Mr. B. F. Underwood, a well-known Freethought lecturer of the States.

A new Freethought Association has been started at Detroit, under the title of the Investigators Society.

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Feb. 21,  
Progress

The *Boston Investigator* is about to enter on its sixty-second year. This is a venerable record for a Freethought paper, and we are glad to add the *Investigator* is as lively, fresh, and original as when we first made its acquaintance.

The Society of Human Progress, New York, has hired the Carnegie Recital Hall, Fifty-seventh-street, for a series of Freethought discourses by ex-Rev. H. Frank, author of *The Evolution of the Devil*.

The twentieth anniversary of Mazzini's death was celebrated at Naples by an oration from the ardent Freethinker Professor Giovanni Bovio, who is a deputy to the Italian Parliament.

The Brisbane Freethought Association is now located at Centennial Hall, the largest hall in the city. Mr. Wallace Nelson delivered the opening lecture to a very large audience.

*Modern Thought*, of Bombay, has completed its first volume, to which it has issued an index containing a goodly list of articles. By its bold and vigorous onslaught on all forms of superstition, our contemporary is doing a good and much-needed work in India.

We have never disguised the fact that it will take a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, to bring the London Hall of Science project safely into harbor. No apology is needed, therefore, for continually pressing upon Freethinkers the necessity of their prompt as well as generous assistance. Considering the many recent claims upon the Freethought party, we are very far from complaining of the amount of support already accorded to the scheme for securing headquarters for the N. S. S., which shall be at the same time a substantial memorial to Charles Bradlaugh. But as the deposit of £300 is paid, and the Directors must take possession at Midsummer, it is highly desirable that a very much larger number of shares should be taken up immediately. This will allow the calls to be made without undue haste, and enable the Directors to take possession of the premises with no greater mortgage than the first contemplated £1,000. To this end £2,000 should be raised by Midsummer, and we should like to see that sum distributed over four or five thousand shares. As there is only a period of three clear months before that date, we earnestly appeal to the whole Freethought party, and especially to the rank and file of the party, to apply for shares without delay. Those who can take shares and do not, those who hold back until too late, will be responsible for the mischief that must happen if this project should by any chance come to grief.

THE MARRIAGE OF GOD AND THE DEVIL.\*  
(From the "Twentieth Century.")

PERVERTED notions of Deity and Devil have been more effectual evils in the mental world than all other delusions. Doubtless there may be scientific and healthful interpretations of these universal conceptions which, rightly understood, may be uplifting to the race; but as they have been historically interpreted, they have resulted chiefly in evil. It would require a mind of fine microcosmic qualities to discover the dividing line between the conceptions of Deity and Devil as they have developed side by side through all the centuries. I venture to speak upon the marriage of God and the Devil, for in truth these two notions have always gone together; they have been inseparably wedded in all the nations. But though they have been so closely related (perhaps their real relation is more like that of the Siamese twins than that of husband and wife), nevertheless they have been so constantly interchanged as to make it difficult at times to tell which was God and which Devil.

The God of every age has become the Devil of the next—the God of one people, the Devil of all its neighbors. Indeed, the same spirit prevails to-day. The Protestant regards the Catholic God as a very black Devil, while the Catholic reciprocates the compliment with eloquent agility. Not long ago Protestants thought Methodists had horns, being genuine offspring of their Devil-God; while the Methodists regarded the Presbyterian God as a first-class butcher, who taught his noble son Calvin his bloody art to perfection. This, however, is a very ancient habit among

\* A lecture delivered at Berkeley Lyceum, Sunday evening, Feb. 21, by Henry Frank, lecturer for the Society of Human Progress.

all religious people. The Jewish God, for instance, was at one time Satan himself. That is, Satan was a primitive God of Palestine, and when the Jewish hordes overran that country they embraced the ruling God. But in the course of ages the Jews improved their manners, and under the leadership of Moses found a God in the woods whom they called Jehovah. After they had become fully acquainted with their Wood-God Jehovah, they learned to detest their former God Satan, and so called him the King of Devils. All these facts can be easily proved by the Jewish scriptures.

Just so soon as one nation conquered another the gods of the victims became very base in the eyes of the victors, and they straightway reduced them to the level of devils. From this fact we learn that gods were very handy instruments in the employment of warriors. They did better work than sword and cannon and fire; for if you once degrade your victim into a worshipper of the Devil and an infidel to the true God, you have for ever damned him. Therefore the victors ever paraded their gods upon their shields and banners, and dragged their conquered gods (the devils) behind their chariot wheels.

But this is the precise religious method utilised to-day. When a worshipper of the prevailing God—the Jewish Christian Deity—opens his eyes sufficiently to discern his real nature, he rebels; he sees he is worshipping a monster. Henceforth to him the Christian God (*i.e.*, the theological God—the God of the dogmatists) is a devil, and his allegiance is foresworn. But the Christian can play better at this game, because the Christian practically owns the social and political age. Hence he turns upon the rebel, and charges him with having denied the true God and become a follower of the Devil. Therefore he cries "Atheist." But from the philosophic infidel's view-point there are no greater Atheists, no stouter deniers of nature's true god, than these self-same God-worshipping Christians.

Therefore I say God and the Devil are one and the same. They are both merely expressions of men's ideas, and they become God or Devil as they are happily or unhappily entertained. All depends upon a man's religious appetite. Some days, when one's stomach enjoys an especially good digestive condition, hardtack and boiled beans and pork will constitute an unusually relishable meal. On that day boiled beans, as it were, is his gastronomic god. But on some other day, when his stomach is soured and he can eat nothing but thin mutton broth, boiled beans become a distressing devil to his whole system. That is the way God and the Devil have interchanged relations all through history.

To make my position clear I will venture to assert that God always stands as the symbol of authority and the Devil as the symbol of iniquity. Now, in different ages these symbols are interchanged; what is iniquity at one time being goodness at another, and what is authority at one period at another becoming utterly powerless. Hence I understand the marriage of God and the Devil to consist in the union of authority and iniquity. Whenever wrong sits in high authority, then you have the marriage of God and the Devil.

Now, the first place where I should look for the existence of this abnormal union would be where you would least expect to find it—namely, in the Church of God. Here, without a doubt, God is in authority, and here, too, the Devil reigns. The Church seems to be established as the great social master of ceremony. The Church is the medium of social advantages—little more. The vast membership of the Church is sustained because she is capable of compelling communicants to enlist, for without her help social position and success in business are not to be procured.

The Church has become the tool of fashion and the victim of wealth. She dare not raise her voice against any of the existing evils which attack the representatives of stolen wealth, because in so doing she strikes her blows at the pillars that uphold her. The rich churches of this city are maintained by the wealth of social princes, stolen on Wall-street or procured by the outrageous right of inheritance; and the preacher who dares to lift his voice against their repulsive methods of business would be at once ejected from his pulpit. I can understand how some day the laboring classes will appreciate the fact that the organised Church, which is the real conservator of all existing wrongs, is the greatest enemy which confronts

them. Some day I believe the multitudes who are held in the grip of poverty will understand that their tyrants and oppressors are those who are worshipping God on cushioned seats and in silken surplices, and then, on that *dies iræ*, I believe they will march in long processions to the doors of those churches and clamor for their rights, as once the submerged masses of Paris howled before the doors of Louis and his unfortunate queen.

When that terrible day comes, then the beginning of the world's greatest revolution will be in hand. Either the Church must be converted into a defender of the people's rights or the power of the Church must be demolished, before the toiling victims of social oppression will ever secure justice, success, and contentment. Hence, I say in the Church you will find the Christian God married to the Devil of social tyranny and economic injustice. Therefore, not until this social God of Christianity shall be generally regarded as a devil need you ever look for such a readjustment of social relations as shall constitute the regeneration of society.

For this social God preaches through the 10,000 dol. lips of his chosen preachers that poverty is one of the natural and ineradicable conditions of society. It was foreordained along with Calvin's election and reprobation that seven-eighths of the world's people should be poor and one-eighth rich; that the one-eighth should live off the hard-earned coins of the seven-eighths, while they should live off the sweat of their brows. But the Church throws the sop of solace to the Cerberus of injustice by executing innumerable promissory notes for the benefit of the believing portion of mankind. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," she teaches. "The poor ye have always with you"; "Blessed are the poor"; "Blessed are the meek"; "Blessed are they that mourn"; "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst." "For behold," she says, "I have executed sight drafts for you on the Bank of Heaven. Rich enough will you be when you get there. For these drafts are all written and sealed with the blood of Jesus."

And 15,000,000 fools in the United States gratefully receive these sight drafts, stow them away in safety vaults, and continue in their poverty, their degradation, and their shame, all for the "love of Jesus." Precious innocents! Beautiful dupes!

(To be concluded).

#### THE REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

WITH reference to a remark as purporting to be made at Banbury by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, upon which you comment in your issue for March 13, it is but right to say that Mr. Hughes had some foundation to go on. Mr. Hughes showed me the secular work done at his Mission House in Golden-square, which I thought a new and useful addition to Methodism. He remarked that Cleveland Hall had passed into their hands. I, supposing similar work was being done there, said "I was glad" it was so. I knew that Cleveland Hall had long been a mere dancing building, over which we had no control, but were made answerable for it in public opinion because it was built out of the Jenkins Bequest left to a party of our way of thinking, who, as you say, ought to still possess it. I was glad we were relieved by a semi-secular Methodist occupation of all responsibility regarding the place. All the same I think dancing, well conducted, is in its place as good as Methodism.

My saying that "had Wesleyanism in my youth been tolerant, friendly to political liberty, and taken as much interest in material improvement as Mr. Hughes and his friends appear to do now, I might not have been a Secularist," was saying no more than Danton might have said had he declared that if the French monarchy had not been selfish, vicious and oppressive, he probably would not have been a revolutionist. In my youth I was a constant and admiring hearer of Methodist preachers, and had they been for reason and secular welfare I might have joined them. But had they encouraged me to reason, I should have left them when I found their tenets unreasonable. I should have had respect for them in their secular work, if they had done any in my day—which they not only did not, but denounced those who did.

I need not say I am at an antipodean distance from Mr. Hughes in theology; but I have respect for him for his secular work.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

#### BOOK CHAT.

Mirabeau was the greatest figure in the French Revolution. He was also an Atheist. His career, therefore, is exceptionally interesting to Freethinkers.

It is curious that such a man as Mirabeau should have no biography in English. Carlyle indeed wrote a brilliant Essay upon the Titan, and carefully cut his statue for the gallery of the *History of the French Revolution*. But there is no real Life of Mirabeau in our language. Nor can it be said that the French have done justice to one of the most remarkable of their orators and statesmen.

Welcome, then, is the *Vie de Mirabeau*, by A. Mézières, of the French Academy, just published by Hachette. It is an admirable piece of work from every point of view. The materials for a scientific study of Mirabeau had already been collected, chiefly by Louis de Loménie and his son Charles. M. Mézières was in consequence free to pen this monograph, at once solid and brilliant, without encumbering his pages with a profusion of details. He has painted, so to speak, a fine historical portrait. He has aimed at truth as well as pictorial effect; for, as he observes, no artifice of talent is a substitute for verisimilitude.

Space does not permit us to dwell upon the political aspects of Mirabeau's career; his part in the opening drama of the Revolution, his ideas of government, his conception of constitutional monarchy, his relations with Louis and Marie Antoinette. M. Mézières' criticism of these things is of the texture of his study and cannot well be extracted. On the question of Mirabeau's alleged venality, however, we may remark that he takes the Titan's own view of the matter. "Paid, but not bought," said Mirabeau of himself. He wanted money for all sorts of purposes, and he obtained it, but it did not render him false to his principles.

Mirabeau's death was a magnificent episode. "After a life so stormy and full of divagations," says M. Mézières, "he accepted death with superb tranquility, without a shadow of moral disquietude, without any thought of the beyond. The pagan culture and philosophy of the eighteenth century had uprooted in him the last vestiges of Christian belief. Dying, he thought of the present hour, of that human glory he had so striven for, not of eternity. To the very last he would play his part, surprise his contemporaries, and excite their admiration by his firmness in face of death."

Mr. Charles Watts has issued a new pamphlet on *Bible Morality* (London: Watts and Co. 3d). It is thoughtful and eloquent, and should have a wide circulation.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake's "Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life," to which we frequently called attention during its appearance in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* is, we are glad to learn, shortly to be published in book form by Mr. Fisher Unwin.

A new volume of the Walt Whitmanish poems, entitled *Towards Democracy*, is to be issued by the same publisher. The writer is Mr. Edward Carpenter, author of *England's Ideal*, and one of the most noticeable of the Socialist school.

It is now just one hundred years since Herbert Marsh published his *Authenticity of the Five Books of Moses Considered*, and thirty years since Colenso published the first part of his work on the Pentateuch. The slow-moving clergy have, however, not yet agreed to give up Moses lest Jesus Christ should slip after him. But year by year the tide of heterodoxy goes stronger even in the Church. This is evinced by Canon Driver's concise and clear *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, having reached a third edition, with two new indices, and by the re-issue of an enlarged edition of Prof. Robertson Smith's *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, which was reviewed in our columns on its first appearance some ten years ago.

Messrs. George Bell and Sons are about to publish a volume of essays by Anna Swanwick, the translator of Goethe, under the title of *Poets: the Interpreters of their Times*.

Professor Karl Pearson, author of *The Ethic of Freethought*, writes the latest volume of Walter Scott's *Contemporary*

Science Series. It is entitled *The Grammar of Science*. Prof. Pearson expects science to supersede all theology.

Those interested in archæology will take note of Chapman and Hall's publication of a translation of G. Maspero's work on *Ancient Egypt and Assyria*.

*Structures Upon the Salvation Army*, by C. Hemington (Kirby, 17 Bouverie-street), is a twopenny pamphlet by a Calvinist who considers Booth's doctrines unscriptural and his methods blasphemous. He cites adverse opinion on the Army from the late Lord Shaftesbury and Mr. R. C. L. Bevan.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINISTER.  
A FORECAST.

THE words were long, the subject bold,  
The minister infirm and old,  
His threadbare gown and tie of grey,  
Seemed to have known a better day.  
The Bible, now his only joy,  
The people threatened to destroy;  
The last of all the Cloth was he  
Who talked of Hell and Trinity.  
For many a day their date was fled,  
His sober brethren all were dead;  
And he distressed by laugh and hiss,  
Wished to be with them, and in Bliss.  
No longer, prancing, would he yell,  
Of writhing souls condemned to Hell;  
No longer now a leading light,  
In pulpit high, a welcome sight.  
He preached to child and elder grey,  
His much-premeditated say.  
Old faiths were changed, beliefs were gone—  
Reason at last was on the throne.  
The people, freed from tyrant God,  
Had called his maudlin creed a fraud.  
A saddened preacher, moved to tears,  
Talked mystery to unheeding ears.  
And told, alas! to empty pews,  
The once accredited "good news."  
He paused—not half his sermon read—  
Looked up to heaven, "Would I were dead."  
Full long he gazed with wistful eye—  
No humbler resting-place was nigh.  
The steal gleams bright, the deed is done,  
Ah! now the gate of heaven is won,  
Which oft sent back to deathless grave  
The honest, ignorant, and the brave,  
But ne'er was closed (how could it be?)  
Against the righteous Pharisee.  
God marked the aged preacher's mien,  
His joyful look, and soul as lean,  
And bade the angels tend him well  
For he had scarce escaped from hell!  
Heaven's gates were closed, and ne'er again  
Would open to the sons of men;  
For Reason's power—Religion's doom—  
Had made them heedless of the tomb!

J. A. GIBSON.

"Mamma, is God an Englishman?" asked an American girl. "No, my dear; why do you ask?" "Because Mr. Prayman addressed him on Sunday as Lord God."

Some progressive and a conservative theologians were discussing the higher criticism of the Bible the other day. "The fact of the matter is," said one in concluding the argument, "that the methods of the progressive theologians are historical." "And, pray," asked the other, "what are our methods?" "Hysterical," replied the liberal brother.

"No, sir!" exclaimed old Deacon Ironside, bringing his fist down hard on his work bench. "I'm agin women preachin'! An' so was Paul." "But if you will read Paul closely," suggested Elder Keepalong, "you may come to a different conclusion. Some of the brightest preachers at that ecumenical council in Washington—" "Stop right there, Elder," retorted the deacon. "It's an ecumenical council, ain't it?" "Certainly." "And what kind of a thing would an ecumenical council be? No, sir!" roared Deacon Ironside, "it won't do! It won't do!"

THE BENEFIT OF HELL!

Dr. Jonathan Edwards was the greatest theologian ever produced in New England, and one of the most logical that ever lived. He had no sympathy with the flabby Christianity which has come to the fore in our time, and boldly announced the doctrines of Christ. Hell he believed was a terrible reality for sinners, not a surmise to be explained away, and he wrote a book to show that the punishments of the damned would be everlasting. In Sermon xi., he says, "I shall mention several good and important ends which will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked."

"The saints will be made more sensible how great their salvation is. When they shall see how great the misery is from which God has saved them, and how great the difference he hath made between their state and the state of others who were by nature, and perhaps by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than they, it will give them a sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace. . . . The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardor of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven."

"The sight of hell-torments will excite the happiness of the saints forever. It will give them a more lively relish of their own happiness!"

DOXOLOGY.

"I am pained to the heart," said the Nebraska clergyman, "to know that several members of my congregation paid their money the other evening to witness a dog fight. I cannot understand why men who claim to be Christians, who are husbands and fathers, should care to be present where brute ferocity and bloodshed are the only attractions. My anguish is deepened by the knowledge that one of the contending beasts was owned by Brother Whiteside, whose labors in behalf of the benighted heathen have hitherto endeared him to me. I must call upon the brother for explanation."

"Your reverence," said Mr. Whiteside, "while I know that my conduct has not been exemplary, I feel that I am not entirely to blame. Being certain that my dog could whip anything in the county—"

"Your dog," interrupted the good man, "can do nothing of the kind. My brindled pup, which is not a year old, can chew the tar out of any four-legged beast you have on your ranch. If you don't believe it, I will arrange a match after the final doxology for money, marbles, or chalk. The services will now be resumed, and I will endeavor, in my weak way, to show that the merciful man is merciful to his beast, and that cruelty to animals is one of the crying evils of the day and generation."  
—*Nebraska Journal*.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHEME.—Had the inventors of this story told it the contrary, that is, had they represented the Almighty as compelling Satan to exhibit himself on a cross in the shape of a snake, as a punishment for his new transgression; the story would have been less absurd, less contradictory. But instead of this they make the transgressor triumph and the Almighty fall.—*Dr. E. V. Kenecal, "The Book of God," p. 515.*

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**PROFANE JOKES.**

Adam's fall is supposed to have happened in the afternoon—at the approach of Eve.

Pious Lady: "Do you know what becomes of little boys who swear?" Little boy: "Yes'm. W'en they, gits big 'nough they make policemen of them."

Mother: "And if I tell you the story about the babe in the manger and the wise men from the East, Bobby, will you go to sleep?" Bobby (after studying for a moment: "No, ma, you tell me the story about Jack the Giant-Killer first, and then I'll go to sleep while you're telling about the babe in the manger."

An Upton Museum Manager: "The preacher at our church last night talked about a Mrs. Lot who had turned into a pillar of salt." Assistant: "Yes; I've heard about it." Museum Manager: "Well, why in thunder didn't you let me know about it? I'll bet four dollars some other museum will get hold of the freak before we do."

**SUNDAY MEETINGS.**

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

**LONDON.**

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green-road: 7, T. Crisfield, "Hypnotism: what is it?" (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 3.30, members' quarterly meeting, important business; 5.30, tea and entertainment (tickets 6d.). Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green — Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 5.30, tea (tickets 6d.); 7, music (free); 7.30, entertainment by the Milton Hall Dramatic Company, followed by dancing (free). Tuesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "Why I Cannot be a Christian" (3d. and 6d.).

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30, debating class, Elocution; 7.30, C. J. Hunt, "Christ: God, Man, or Myth?"

Deptford—Lecture Hall, High-street: 7.30, A. B. Moss, "The Triumph of Secularism."

Forest Gate—The Hall (Liberal and Radical Association), Broadway, E.: Thursday, at 8, a free lecture.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "The New County Council" (free); 6.45, music; 7.15, G. W. Foote, "Prayer and Providence" (3d., 6d., and 1s.). Thursday, at 8, G. W. Foote, "The Code of Christ" (opposed by representatives of the Christian Evidence Society) (3d., 6d., and 1s.).

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday, at 8, C. J. Hunt, "Salvation."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Giordano Bruno: his Life and Works." At 7 Kentish Town-road, at 3.30, debating class, West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Stanley Jones, "Man and his Relations." Thursday, at 8, open debate.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter-street: 7 F. Haslam, "The House of Brunswick."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, F. Haslam, "The Bible and Science."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, E. Calvert, "The Darwinian Hypothesis"; 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Creation Story."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Norrish will lecture.

**COUNTRY.**

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, Charles Watts, "The Difficulties of Theism."

Bristol—St. James's Hall: 7, J. Rogers, "Evolution and Morals."

Chatham — Old George Inn: 6.30, F. J. Boorman, "The Principles of Organic Life."

Edinburgh—Labor Hall, 50 South Bridge: 2.30, reading circle for young members; 6.30, J. G. Nicolson, "Man and the Lower Animals."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: Miss Ada Campbell, 11.30, "Religion and Morality"; 2.30, "Woman: her Needs and Sufferings"; 6.30, "Good and Evil, Vice and Virtue, Men and Women."

Hanley — Secular Hall, John-street: 7, members' quarterly meeting.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 3, philosophy class, L. Small, B.Sc., "Bain's Mind and Body, chap. iii."; 7, Harry Smith, "The Lord hath not Spoken" (Ezekiel xxii. 28).

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road All Saints': 3, members' annual meeting; 6.30, social meeting.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' monthly meeting; 7, T. Pearson, "Anarchism and Freethought."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting.

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 2.45, reading circle; 7, G. J. Hore, "Thoughts of a Human Automaton."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: Touzeau Parris, 11, "Unsocial Superstitions"; 3, "Some Glaring Defects in Christianity"; 7, "Why I am Not a Christian"; tea at 5.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 8, mutual improvement class, debate between Mr. Cooper and Mr. Bove on "Competition"; 7, business meeting.

Wolverhampton—Coffee Tavern, Bilston-street: 7, discussion.

**LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.**

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—March 27, Sheffield. April 3, Merthyr; 17, Hall of Science; 24, Milton Hall.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—March 27, Deptford; 30, West Southwark Liberal and Radical Club. April 3, afternoon, Finsbury Park; 10, morning, Mile End; 17, morning, Westminster; evening, Woolwich; 24, morning, Hornsey. May 1, morning, Camberwell; 8, Clerkenwell; 15, morning, Westminster; 22, morning, Mile End. June 5, morning, Camberwell; 12, Clerkenwell; 19, morning, Hornsey. July 3, morning, Camberwell; 10, Clerkenwell; 17, morning, Westminster.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—March 27, Camberwell. April 3, Hyde Park; 10, Kilburn; April 17 to May 1, Annual Tour. May to Sept., all mornings booked.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—March 27, evening, Newington Reform Club. April 3, Southampton; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; evening, Battersea; 24, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Camberwell. May 1, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Battersea.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—April 3, afternoon, Victoria Park; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 17, morning, Mile End Waste; 24, afternoon, Victoria Park.

SAM STANDRING, 2 Morton-street, C-on-M., Manchester.—March 28, Manchester. April 3, Leeds; 4, Manchester; 10, Wigan; 11, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—March 27, West Ham. April 3, morning, Finsbury Park; 15 and 17, Chatham; 24, afternoon, Tottenham. May 1, morning, Clerkenwell Green; evening, Walthamstow; 8, Newcastle; 9, South Shields; 10, North Shields; 15, evening, Battersea; 22, morning, Old Pimlico Pier; 29, morning, Wood Green. June 5, Conference; 12, morning, Kingsland Green; 29, morning, Battersea. July 17, morning, Kingsland Green. Aug. 7, evening, Hammersmith; 28, morning, Lambeth.

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