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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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IS CHRISTIANITY PLAYED OUT?

BLESSED BE YE POOR.

OUR Cartoon is a pointed commentary on the recent discussion in the *London Daily Chronicle*. In a certain sense Christianity is *not* played out. To use a common expression, "there's money in it." That is incontestable. Despite the "poverty" of the "lower clergy," for whom so many appeals are made, the clerical business beats all others, if we compare the amount of investment with the size of the dividend. Relatively speaking the profits are magnificent. There are curates with only a workman's wages, and are of course they merit our deepest sympathy. It is quite shocking to think that a disciple of the "poor Carpenter of Nazareth" has to subsist, and support his ten children, on such a miserable pittance. It is a calamity which calls for tears of blood. But, on the other hand, there are Archbishops with princely incomes, Bishops with lordly revenues, Deans and Canons with fine salaries and snug quarters; and between the two extremes of the fat bishop and the lean curate is a long line of gradations, in which, if we strike an average, the result is very far from despicable. It may be added

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that while the leading Nonconformist ministers, at least in England, do not rival the great Church dignitaries in the matter of income, they often run up to a thousand a year and sometimes over it. Taking the average of their incomes, we have no hesitation in saying it is beyond what they would earn in the ordinary labor market. Still, so far as they are not paid by the State, as the Church clergy *are*, we have no personal reason for complaint. This is a free country—especially for Christians; and if the lay disciples of the poor Carpenter like to pay his professional apostles a fancy price for their work, it is no concern of ours from a business point of view. Nevertheless, as the said apostles are *public* men, who set up as other people's *teachers*, we have a right to express an opinion as to the consistency between their preaching and their practice.

Our gallant colleague, Joseph Symes, who is nobly upholding the Freethought banner in Australia, once asked, "Who's to be Damned if Christianity is True?" Certainly, he said, the clergy stand a fine chance. They are more likely to go to Hades than the congregations they preach to. On an average they are better off. They preach, or *should* preach, the blessings of

poverty, and the curse, nay, the damnableness, of wealth. According to the teaching of Jesus, as we read it in the Sermon on the Mount, and as we find it illustrated in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, every pauper is pretty sure of a front seat in heaven; and every man of property or good income is equally sure of warm quarters in hell. But you do not meet parsons in workhouses, though some of them get a good deal of outdoor relief. Go into a country parish and look for the clergyman's house; you will not find it difficult to discover. The best residence is the squire's, the next best is the parson's. Everywhere the clericals appropriate as much as they can of the good things of this world. They find it quite easy to worship God and Mammon together. The curate has his eye on a vicarage; the vicar has his on a deanery; the dean has his on a bishopric. The Dissenting minister is open to improve his position. Sometimes he is invited to another church. He wrestles with the Lord, and makes inquiries. If they prove satisfactory he recognises "a call." Other people, in ordinary business, would honestly say they were accepting a better situation; but the man of God is above all that, so he obeys the Lord's voice and goes to a position of "greater service," though it would puzzle him to show an extra soul saved by the exchange. Yes, the poor Carpenter's apostles strive to make the best of this world, and take their chance of the next. They are wise in their generation; they resemble the serpent in the text, however they neglect the dove. And for all these things God shall bring them into account—that is, if the gospel be true; for nothing is more certain, according to the gospel, than that the poor will be saved, and those who are not poor will be damned.

Benjamin Disraeli called the Conservative government of Sir Robert Peel "an organised hypocrisy." Modern Christianity appears to us to merit the same description. The note of modern apologetics is the phrase of "Christ-like." In one respect the gentlemen who strike this note are Christ-like. They live on the gifts of the faithful, including those of "rich women." But the likeness ends there. In other respects they are dissimilar to their Master. He died upon the cross, and they live upon the cross. Yes, and many of them get far more on the cross than they would ever get on the square.

Doubtless we shall be censured in vigorous biblical language for speaking so plainly. But we mean every word we say, and are prepared to make it good in discussion. Men should practise what they preach. Those who teach that poverty is a blessing should themselves be poor. Those who teach that God Almighty cried "Woe unto you rich!" should avoid the curse of wealth. If they do not, they are hypocrites. It is no use mincing the matter. Plain speech is best on such occasions. When the great Dr. Abernethy told a gouty, dyspeptic rich patient to "live on sixpence a day and earn it," his advice was more wholesome than the most dexterous rigmarole.

Nothing could better show than the conduct of the clergy that Christianity is played out, if it means the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. Those who preach it cannot practise it; what is more, they do not mean to. The late Archbishop of York, while Bishop of Peterborough, wrote a magazine article on this Sermon on the Mount, in which he urged that any Society that was based upon it would go to ruin in a week. He was paid at that time £4500 a year to preach this Sermon on the Mount, and he did so—in the pulpit; then he mounted another rostrum, and cried, "For God's sake don't practise it."

"Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich" are texts with which the Church has bamboozled the multitude in the interest of the privileged classes. The disinherited sons of earth were promised all sorts of fine compensations in Kingdom-Come; meanwhile kings, aristocrats, priests, and all the rest of the juggling and appropriating tribe, battered on the fruits of other men's labor. The poor were like the dog crossing the stream, and seeing the big shadow of his piece of meat in the water. "Seize the shadow!" the priests cried. The poor did so. But the substance was not lost. It was snapped up and shared by priestcraft and privilege.

The people have been told that the Gospel is a cheap

thing—without money and without price. That is the prospectus. But the Gospel is frightfully dear in reality. Religion costs more than education. England spends more in preparing her sons and daughters for the next world than in training them for this world. Yet the next world may be nothing but a dream, and certainly we know nothing about it; while this world is a solid and often a solemn fact, with its business as well as its pleasures, its work as well as its enjoyments, its duties as well as its privileges. To keep people out of hell, and guide them to heaven (places that only exist in the map of faith), we spend over twenty millions a year. This is a sum which, if wisely devoted, would remedy the worst evils of human society in a single generation. It would found countless institutions of culture and innocent recreation; and, by means of experiments, it would solve a host of social problems. Instead of doing this, we keep up a huge army of black-coats to fight an imaginary Devil; yet we call ourselves a practical people. Christianity has its roots deep down in the wealth of England, and this is the secret of its power, allied of course with its usurped authority over the minds of little children. The churches and chapels are mostly social institutions, Sunday resorts of the "respectable" classes. For any purpose connected with the real welfare of the people Christianity might just as well be dead and buried—as it will be when the people see the truth. G. W. FOOTE.

A TRIANGULAR DUEL.

It was a lovely Sunday morning on board the steam ship "Marmion," bound from London to Leith. There were but few passengers, for it was the dull season. Among them was a Scotch minister, and the sailors were piped to morning service. All on deck, except myself, gathered round the minister, who proceeded to read from the Bible. Pacing up and down I was soon accompanied by a gentleman, who before long told me he was a Deist. After a little chat we adjourned to the smoking cabin, where we were joined by the minister when he had concluded his short service. I cannot pretend to accurately reproduce the conversation that ensued, but what remains in my memory was something like this:—

CHRISTIAN.—I'm sorry you gentlemen did not put in an appearance, if only as an example to others.

ATHEIST.—I have no wish to act as an example to others in this particular.

DEIST.—The fact is, sir, we do not agree with your views and cannot countenance them.

C.—What is it you take exception to?

D.—Your doctrine of eternal torment, for instance. Who can credit a good God will so punish his children?

C.—You believe, then, in a good God?

D.—Certainly. Nature proclaims there is a divine power and that he is good.

C.—I have just come from visiting a friend at a home for incurables. He is hopelessly paralysed, and cannot even move without pain. What do you say to that punishment, which, mind you, is from an accident, and not for his own misdeeds?

D.—I confess there is much in nature I cannot understand, but there is enough to show me there is an all-good God.

C.—To show you, perhaps—for you, I presume, have had a Christian education. But I have been out in Africa, where the only gods believed in are stone and wooden fetishes, and these are worshipped with bloody sacrifices and absurd ceremonies.

D.—Probably far less absurd to them than your creed is to me.

C.—You evade my case, which is that nature does not suffice to tell them about an all-good God. For this they need the light of revelation.

D.—But your revelation reveals nothing. The Jehovah of the Bible is certainly not an all-good God, but partial, savage, and bloodthirsty.

C.—My point, I must repeat, is that exactly the same difficulties confront us in nature that we find in the Bible. Jehovah declares he visits the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. This is verified in my own experience. My grandfather was a three-bottle man, my father was

over-fond of port, and I, though abstemious, suffer from the gout. Nature, too, seems savage and blood-thirsty. She kills her children day by day, and often agonisingly.

A.—It seems to me yours is an argument for Atheism.

D.—Just so. Two blacks cannot make a white. Your revelation should clear up the difficulties found in nature; instead of which it adds to them. Your arguments and those of Bishop Butler, whom you follow, would serve to defend all the atrocious and absurd superstitions of the savages you visited.

C.—Not at all. I hold that nature indicates the self-same God more fully revealed in the Bible, and our duty is to learn his will and obey him.

D.—And I answer, the God of the Bible is not the God revealed by my heart and conscience, and I cannot worship what I can neither reverence nor love. Jehovah is no more to me than Jupiter.

A.—And I answer that I find no all-good God revealed either in nature or in the Bible.

D.—But there must be a Supreme Power who designed everything.

A.—The mouse for the cat, and cats' skins for ladies' gloves?

C.—Nature does not suffice to tell us whether there be one or many superior powers. It cannot assure us that the designer is the creator. It does not reveal his omnipotence nor his infinite goodness. Its difficulties must be cleared up in another world. Nature, in short, is an enigma. We see through a glass darkly, but by the light of the Bible we may dimly discern, and yet fervently believe, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

D.—I'm not sure that man should arrogate immortality to himself any more than for the animals. In nature we find that of a thousand seeds but one ripens. I think I can discern some good purpose beneath all sin and suffering, but cannot flatter myself that my own personality is immediately concerned therein. I do not know anyone so good as to deserve eternal felicity, or so utterly and impossibly wicked as to deserve eternal torments.

A.—The only harmony I discern is that which must exist between life and its environment, and this is effected by constant suffering and death. What is the one growing seed to the myriads crushed out? All of good that I observe is from the efforts of human kind. What is man in his natural state without the inheritance of ages of civilised human effort? Let our missionary friend answer. In the discords of nature I note but one harmony—the still, sad music of humanity.

C.—Man in his fallen state is truly a wicked and corrupt creature.

D.—No, he is not a fallen angel, but a risen ape, and some day may as far outsoar us as Shakespeare does the savage fetish worshipper.

C.—This world is too evidently corrupt; wrong too often triumphs. Believe me, your ideal state must be in another world.

A.—How can a state of injustice in this world prove a state of justice in any other, when you agree all the arguments for that other world must be drawn from this present one? The fact is, you first assume a God, and then a heaven to cover his handiwork. The one assumption impels you to the other, at which my friend, who is more modest if less logical, pauses.

C.—I hope he agrees with me that this world, with all its sin and wickedness, is a state of probation. If so, all the discipline we undergo is surely to prepare us for a future state.

A.—For what sort of a future state does your friend's paralysis prepare him?

D.—I've spent much time learning various languages, but certainly I do not expect to put them to use in some future existence.

C.—You do not know.

A.—A good reason for silence, none for affirmation.

C.—I admit philosophy can give us no positive assurance of a future state, still less of eternal rewards and punishments. This conviction must come from religion. Where philosophy is weak religion is strong.

A.—That is, it bolsters up poor arguments by fictions.

C.—It is no use arguing with you. We have no common ground, though I hope my friend, when he sees the only alternative is Christianity or Atheism, will decide for Christianity.

A.—And I hope he will follow his reason whithersoever it leads him. If we want sure standing ground we must, as Descartes said, be prepared to doubt of all that can be doubted.

J. M. WHEELER.

RELIGION: PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL.

THERE is a marked difference between practice and theory: the one pertains to conduct, and the other refers to opinion. For centuries the world has been dominated by various theoretical religions, which have been but of little use for any practical good in the regulation of human actions. The trend of modern thought is undoubtedly in the direction of new ideas as to what religion should really represent. The old religious notions are rapidly dying out, as it has been discovered that they are too theoretical for this practical age. The thinkers of to-day no longer rely on a faith born in the dead past—a faith which time is fast crumbling to pieces. We hear much now of "the religion of science," "the religion of the future," and "the religion of doing good." It should be remembered, however, that it was Thomas Paine who inaugurated the practical religion of goodness independently of Christianity, and for so doing he has been reviled and condemned by the many theorists of theology. But we are proud to know that his memory has been nobly vindicated; the practical principles which regulated his life have triumphed over the wild theories of his opponents, and are now being accepted and adopted in preference to those of his revilers.

In our opinion, while the term religion is associated with reckless speculations concerning the supernatural, it will be impossible to discover any religious system that is compatible with the higher requirements and the genius of the nineteenth century. Society is caring less and less for the mysteries of theology and more and more for the realities of humanity. Of course the old type of believers will not suddenly disappear; ancient superstitions are slow in departing. Hence we have still amongst us, not only a class of believers who feel convinced that they have found a religion congenial to their nature, but we have also persons who think that, amidst the various conflicting religions claiming supernatural authority, the true one is to be found. We feel necessitated to believe that these persons are in earnest, for perhaps it would be too much to suppose that any sensible man would devote half his lifetime in search of what he did not assume to exist. The great difficulty, however, to be encountered in this search is that for the most part the investigation concerns that about which nothing is known, although a superabundance of language is uttered and written upon the subject. It is curious to note how eloquent an emotional theologian can sometimes become when he is expatiating upon matters of which he has no knowledge. Theology has its fascinations, and the evil in all past religions has been that the devotees have been too prone to yield to such fascinating influences. While this drawback is still to be found in many existing professions, it is encouraging to find that there is an increasing yearning for a religion (if the word must be retained) of active work, based upon natural inspiration and mundane requirements. The thought once bestowed on God is now largely transferred to man, and the time formerly spent in an effort to prepare for heaven is now employed in the improvement of earth. If this secular action may be called a religion, then it is the only one that concerns us, for its utility is verified by its practical results in the well-being of those who act up to it.

James says in his epistle that pure and undefiled religion is to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." If this be so, it is evident that the popular religion is not the genuine article. In fact, tested by James's standard, all the great religions of the world have been fearfully adulterated with the fictions of a perverted imagination. Take from them all their useless ceremonies, their absurd rites, and their

pictured gods and devils, saints and angels, and what remains? Simply a few elementary moral maxims that are as old as the race and are the common property of men of all ages and nations. Leaving aside other religions, is not Christianity built on the assumption of innumerable small miracles, varied by an occasional large one? What is the principal improvement this modern faith offers upon the one of old? It substitutes a man for a goat as an offering for the sins of the people. It is still blood, but human blood instead of the blood of the lower animals. And yet this religion is proclaimed as being the highest and the most divine that was ever revealed to benighted man; and upon this faith unhappily the wealth, the learning, and the eloquence of nearly two thousand years have been expended. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis 'tis true." The hope and the eyes of the world are fixed on the figure of a young man who perished at the Tyburn of his nation as a turbulent disturber of the peace of Jerusalem. We are offered everlasting happiness if we will only fall down and worship this crucified idol. Those who accept the offer furnish good evidence that man has indeed fallen. That gifted intellects should devote their energies to magnifying the importance of this event into the greatest fact in history, and representing it to be the one thing needful for the progress and happiness of mankind, is one of the most melancholy acts of this expiring century.

The theological religions of the world have proved persistent foes to human happiness, for they have absorbed the attention of men, and have been put forward as being the centre of all human interest, thus depriving mankind of the beneficial results that would have followed by giving due attention to the real affairs of life. Being "blind leaders of the blind," the priests of these religions have perpetuated fear, mental poverty, and an absence of self-reliance. Supernatural religions, instead of cultivating thought, the illuminator of the life of man, bring into play imaginary agencies that are foreign to well-trained natures. Happily, theological religions no longer command the chief attention of the leading minds of to-day. Men of rare gifts have studied the parchment religions of the world, and so have destroyed the pretensions to inspiration and authority which have been claimed for them. An infallible book has been shown to be as great an absurdity and imposition as an infallible Church. As the one dies, so dies the other, and they both go to one place, from which let us hope there will be no resurrection.

The task of to-day is to learn the value of human effort, that we may possess ourselves of strength to enable us to sow the seeds of truth, though others may reap the harvest. Those who have abandoned the creeds of the Churches may find pleasure in work that brings happiness to others as well as joy to themselves. In the grand literature of the Saxon tongue may be found expressions of thought as noble, and aspirations as pure, as any contained in the Christian's Bible. An English mind can experience greater inspiration from the songs of the British poets than from the wailings and groanings of the prophets of Israel. The natural beauty of our island, the home of our birth, is as charming to us as is Palestine to the most devout Christian. Our thoughts and interests are here, not there; our duties and obligations arise out of our present life on our part of the globe. It is here that our hearts and hopes are fixed, and not amidst the ruined temples and barren wastes of distant and alleged sacred lands.

Practical religion is that which teaches science as the providence of man and enjoins obedience to nature's laws. The more we study science the more we know of the universe and of man, and the more we see the importance and uniformity of natural laws. Our knowledge can only enable us to better understand these laws, and to harmonise our conduct with their inevitable decrees. Our pains and pleasures are the result of conditions of existence, and our efforts are usefully made and wisely directed when they are employed in the endeavor to discover those conditions that are best adapted to promote the health, freedom, and happiness of the general community. This is practical not theological religion, and the only one

that can bear useful and pleasant fruit in our time. The number of its believers will increase in proportion as men and women cease to study the things that were and concentrate their thoughts and labors on things that are.

CHARLES WATTS.

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH.

STILL they come! Another Church has been started called "Our Father's Church," because "multitudes of men and women in every Church are looking longingly beneath and beyond dogma and rite to find the permanent and universal basis of a Church that shall be truly human and divine." So says the *Christian World* in its description of the new fad, and it will be at once noticed that the mention of the human portion comes first. Our Father's Church is based on the perception and practical application of seven guiding principles. The first is "The fatherhood of God, who is the inmost uplifting life of all things." The article says "God himself can never be known, though his fatherhood may be." It is very evident from this that the new Church does not intend to dispense with mystery; for it is certainly a mystery as to how it can be possible to know the fatherhood of God and yet not know God himself. It is equivalent to saying that we can know a man's peculiarities without ever having seen him or known him. The writer says: "By these words, 'Fatherhood of God,' we mean that the mysterious Almighty Power which produces all things is mindful and merciful; and that, in the end, when all our speculations and dark imaginings are outgrown, the trust of the human spirit in the might and mercifulness of that Power will survive, as the beginning and the end of true religion."

It is very consoling to note that the new body are going to worship a "mindful and merciful" God. This will be a change for the better, and we should like to know him, and to be shown any mindful and merciful actions of his. They say that "he is fully revealed in no book, no Church, but is ever the Ideal, the best in all things everywhere." M'yes! but if he is the best in all things everywhere, who is the worst in all things everywhere? The Devil, perhaps. But it is remarkable that the article contains no reference either to his Satanic majesty or to his palatial abode. Verily Our Father's Churchists are wise in their generation. It is strange, however, that although they say that God is fully revealed in no book, they intend to stick to the Bible. And here they commence their inconsistency; for even if they hold that it only partially reveals him, they totally demolish their "mindful and merciful" deity, for the God of the Bible is a perfect paragon of brutality, and to look up to him as an ideal is to show an appreciation of all that is false, brutal, bestial, and unmerciful. They say that "in a very profound sense he is Our Father." Then we should recommend them to prosecute him for ill-treating his children. If he was an earthly father he would have been in the dock long ago.

The second principle is the "Brotherhood of man, for sympathy and service," and the article says that "mankind is one of the manifestations of God coming in the fullness of time from lower forms of life." Now this is nothing but an adoption of the theory of evolution, and in so far as this is concerned, we welcome their good sense, at the same time asking, however, how far it coincides with the rib story and the fable of the mud man as related in Genesis i. and ii.? The afore-mentioned principle, together with that of "the ceaseless development and advancement of the human race, by struggle and possession, sorrow and joy, death and life," as well as that of "the unreserved recognition of the secular world as containing all sacred things," are, when stripped of that godly cloak under which Christianity conceals her thefts from Freethought, nothing but an adoption of our motto, "The world is my country, mankind my brethren, and to do good is my religion." We cannot even possess a good motto but the Christians envy us its possession, and practically adopt it. Another principle is "the establishment of the kingdom of heaven everywhere upon the earth," and they propose

to do this bringing "light and justice, hope and sympathy, purity and humanity, into the sphere of hardship and struggle." Here is Secularism again; and their kingdom of heaven is nothing more or less than a happy earthly existence; it is no advance upon our ideal; and if this is heaven, all Freethinkers have long endeavored to establish it. Taking Our Father's Church as it stands, it is as secular as it dare be whilst it is trammelled with the chains of superstition. In speaking of one principle, viz., "the unceasing inspiration of man by God," the writer says: "Belief in the sole authority of the Bible, as the one revelation from God, was the weapon which served at the Reformation to beat down the claim that asserted the sole authority of a Church or a man; but the weapon has become a chain."

This is a very advanced opinion to be expressed by any Church, and it only shows that which a large number of Christians refuse to recognise, viz., that the light of Freethought is guiding many a man and woman through the pitchy darkness of superstition. The seventh principle of the new Church is "The constant communion of kindred spirits in and between the unseen world." The program will be attractive to many at first, but it is evident that the founders of Our Father's Church are endeavoring to give the Christian a sprat in order to keep him from eating a mackerel; they are trying to retard the progress of Freethought by giving inquirers an adulterated mixture of Superstition and Freethought. It cannot succeed. Those who have been attracted by the electric light will not be led aside by a flickering tallow candle. Splits will speedily occur in the new brotherhood, and the result must be in our favor.

ASHLEY SLADE.

ACID DROPS.

Theosophy grasps at every alleged new fact on the borderland of science, where phenomena are as yet in a twilight of uncertainty. Mrs. Besant, for instance, found fresh "evidences" in the hypnotic experiments of Dr. Luys at Paris. Patients' "sensibility" was transferred to glasses of water and other objects, and when these were touched the patients shrank or screamed with pain. It was a very pretty story, and Theosophists were in raptures. But the whole thing has been exposed by Dr. Ernest Hart, who has proved that the patients (mostly hysterical women) were shamming or under suggestion. When the wrong objects were substituted for the ones endowed with the patients' "sensibility" they were just as efficacious. Of course the change was unknown to the patients, who went on with their performance unsuspectingly.

Dr. Ernest Hart tried an experiment on some patients who could see blue and red flames round the poles of a magnet. When it was demagnetised, unknown to them, they saw the blue and red flames just the same.

Certain drugs in tubes, held near patients, produced curious psychological phenomena. It was positively marvellous. Dr. Hart, however, put the wrong drugs in the tubes, without the patients' knowledge, and the curious psychological phenomena still occurred. Valerian, which attracts cats, made one lady act like a tabby. Dr. Hart substituted alcohol, and the lady scratched, mewed, licked, and cleaned her whiskers. Cherry Laurel Water was called for, but Valerian put in the tube; and the lady went into an ecstasy, instead of behaving like a cat. Altogether, it is pretty clear that the "marvels of hypnotism," so far as they prop up Occultism, are humbug from beginning to end.

The *Christian World* "cannot afford space for further correspondence" on "Where is Heaven?" Perhaps it feels like the editor of the *Revue des deux Mondes*, who returned a contributor's article on God, with the remark that the question "lacked actuality."

Father Ignatius is still fulminating against the heretics in the Church of England, such as Canon Driver, Professor Cheyne, and the Rev. Charles Gore, the Principal of Pusey House. He represents them as "attacking" the Bible, whereas they declare they are rescuing it from destruction. A memorial against these "heretics" is going the round of

the Oxford colleges for signature. It is to be presented to the Archbishop and Bishops. What they will do with it is not hard to prophecy. They are not likely to agree with Father Ignatius, that the way to save the ship of the Church in the storm of criticism is to spread all the canvas of orthodoxy.

Dr. Macgregor, of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, says that "for pure English he considers the Bible first, Shakespeare next, and Tennyson third." This is, of course, a very arbitrary classification. The styles of Shakespeare, for instance, and the translators of the English Bible, are extremely different. Nor does Dr. Macgregor tell us what he means by *pure* English. Our language is an amalgam, and a great part of its force and beauty lies in its synonymous derivations from various sources. If *composition* is the test, there is a good deal of slipshod in the Bible, although there are many passages of great excellence. Coleridge declared the New Testament to be worse in this respect than the Old Testament. "There are slovenly phrases," he said, "which would never have come from Ben Jonson, or any other good prose writer of that day."

"Biblical miracles," the *Christian Commonwealth* says, "are the only recorded miracles on which reliance can be placed." Hear, hear! There's nothing like leather. Still, it seems that the Bible miracles must be taken with a certain amount of salt—for which apply at the *Commonwealth* office. Joshua making the sun stand still, and Jonah's excursion on board a whale, and Samson's tough jawbone, are treated as "more or less inaccurate or exaggerated descriptions." Good! But the Freethinker goes a step farther, and treats *all* the Bible miracles in the same way.

Curiously enough, the *Commonwealth* sticks to the Jericho miracle. The wall of that city did fall flat, but no law of nature was infringed. This is sheer nonsense, however; for there is no power in rams' horns to blow down big walls. If they actually fell, there must have been an infringement of the natural laws of cohesion and gravitation.

Our contemporary's history is on a par with its logic. It finds a powerful argument for the reality of the New Testament miracles in "the unparalleled suffering of the Apostles." Indeed! Where is the historical proof? We venture to say that there is not a scrap in existence. All the Christian can produce is a mass of grotesque legends, which have as much historical value as the *Arabian Nights* or the adventures of Baron Munchausen.

Then as to "unparalleled sufferings"—is not the adjective high-flown, and even impudent? The *Commonwealth* is simply taking advantage of its readers' laziness or ignorance. Not, of course, that this is surprising; for it has been well remarked that "Christian veracity" deserves to rank with "Panic faith."

Dr. Giles Hitchens is confident that Christianity is not played out, and has tried to prove it in a recent sermon. His arguments are hackneyed; we shall not follow them. What we want to point out is that he has no right to speak of "the dying, despairing Emperor of old, who said, 'O Galilean, thou hast conquered!'" Julian never uttered this exclamation; it is simply a Christian fable; and if Dr. Giles Hitchens does not know the fact, he is, in history as well as in theology, a blind leader of the blind—or, as some would say, an ignorant leader of ignoramuses.

London Secularists will have to fight hard before and during the next School Board elections. At present the reactionists are in a very decided majority, and they are using their power without the slightest scruple. The Rev. Meredyth Kitson's motion that the Board teachers shall tell the children that Christ is God, and explain the Trinity to them, has been passed to the extent of remitting it to the School Management Committee for consideration and report, after consultation with the Scripture Committee. Several speakers boasted that the majority of the London ratepayers belonged to the Church of England, and more than hinted that Church of England religion should be taught in the schools. And it will be done, unless the Nonconformists are courageous and logical enough to accept the Secular ticket.

The present Pope has worked the Jubilee racket four times since 1879, and hopes yet to have the Jubilee of his cardinalate and of his succession to the Papacy. The Hebrew Jubilee, which it is doubtful if ever carried out, came but every fifty years, and was intended for the benefit of the poor. Creditors were to release their debtors, slaves to recover their freedom, and the lands to be re-divided. But the Jubilee racket is now only worked for the benefit of the rich, and Signor Pecci finds it a good expedient to bring the funds of the faithful into the Vatican treasury.

Jubilees and pilgrimages are alike used to rally the Pope's supporters and accentuate his position. He cannot, without going in the teeth of all Christian history and destroying the inmost purpose of his Church, give up his claim to universal dominion. This, despite newspaper men, we may be quite sure no Pope ever would do while he holds himself the divinely-appointed vicegerent of Christ. A Pope cannot submit to acknowledge any secular power, be it king or commonwealth. Leo XIII. and the Jesuits know the position. So do we; but a crowd of good-natured Protestants fancy the pretensions of Popery are virtually at an end, though they are as plain as the noses on their faces.

The Bishop of London declares that in the metropolis there are now "a larger number of persons who never go to any place of worship than in any other similar spot in the whole of the island." This is largely owing to the efforts of Freethinkers to provide some counter attractions on Sunday.

What the bishop wants is to raise a sum of one million pounds for the religious needs of London. We would undertake to carry on a secular mission in every part of the metropolis for a hundredth part of the money.

The bishop knows that about twenty of the most valuable City churches are almost empty and useless, and that their sale would realise a considerable portion of the money he requires. But he knows, too, they are nice little billets for friends in the Church, and the poorer clergy must have some such baits to draw them into a profession which is becoming more and more despised. So he prefers to cadge from the laity to employing the sources he has already at command.

At St. Anne's Church, Soho, they distribute a handbill stating that "To defray the expenses an offertory of £30 is required at each service," and asking an offertory "entirely of silver in the gallery, and a contribution of at least two shillings from each ticket-holder." Religion is served at St. Anne's not entirely "without money and without price."

The English Church is the most enormously wealthy organisation in the world; yet it is always crying for more money. Its vast wealth is so unevenly distributed that it can plead with truth that many of its ministers are poorly paid. It calls attention to its curates, but says nothing of the numerous benefices which are almost sinecures.

We shall look forward with interest to the result of the return of the grants of public money for the support of all religious denominations in England and Wales, which has been agreed to by the House of Commons.

The Rev. R. R. Dolling, a popular High Church minister of Landport, at a meeting of the English Church Union, declared that "he held that the Church had not touched the people until they had been brought to the Holy Communion." He instanced that in his parish there were not more than 200 communicants out of a population of 5,000. Judged by this test, we fancy the Church would have to take rank among more insignificant sects.

After fifty years working in London, the Y.M.C.A. has under 10,000 members and associates, and has to give far more attention to gymnasia, musical evenings, football and other secular attractions than when it started.

The good Presbyterians in Dunbarton are scandalised because the Free Church minister wishes his congregation to sing Amen at the close of every hymn or psalm. Amen sticks in their throats as it did in Macbeth's. We wonder if any of them know it is the name of an old Egyptian god,

Eucharino is not the name of a new game or a patent medicine, but of a special preparation of the blood of Aries intended for holy communion. It is advertised as the most suitable wine for sacred purposes. The *Church Times*, which advertises this wine, gives a receipt how to make the body of Christ so that there will be less risk of irreverence by its crumbling and dropping on the floor. You take pure flour, which you mix with water drop by drop until you have a good consistent dough. Then bake in a tin in a slow oven for about an hour. No seasoning.

"Atheism," says the Rev. Edward White, "is extending on every side both among the learned and ignorant." The *Christian Commonwealth*, while praising Mr. White as "a profound thinker" and "a careful observer," begs to differ from him on this point. Among the ignorant, it says, there is "not one Atheist in ten thousand." Here we agree with the *Commonwealth*. That is about the proportion of ignorant Atheists.

Sir Henry Tyler is the "Christian gentleman" who, in the Tory interest, prosecuted Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote for Blasphemy. His failure was complete. Mr. Bradlaugh was acquitted on the ground of fact; and as the jury could not agree in Mr. Foote's case, and no jury was likely to convict while Lord Coleridge held the scales of justice, the prosecution was abandoned; Sir Henry Tyler having to pay all the heavy costs, perhaps with the aid of other "Christian gentlemen."

Sir Henry Tyler has frequently been called a guinea-pig in *Truth*. Certainly he is a great hand at Companies, which do not seem to flourish supernaturally under his direction. He also appears to be an adept in the use of good strong biblical language, with perhaps a dash of Billingsgate. A gentleman who waited on him on behalf of the *Financial Times* says that "Sir Henry ended the interview by the use of language which, we are sorry to say, is quite unfit for publication." We congratulate Christianity on having the support of such a wise, honorable, and refined gentleman.

Only the Catholic Church, says the *Catholic Times*, "exists as a bulwark for the sanctity of marriage." It forgets that it is not many years since the Pope sold for the sum of 4,000 lire a dispensation to Prince Amadeus, Duke of Aosta, to marry his own niece, Princess Leticia Bonaparte, the daughter of his full sister the Princess Clotilde and Prince "Pon-Plon" Napoleon. If the sanctity of marriage rests on such a rotten bulwark, we fear it will have to go.

Miss Hughes, the Lady Principal of the Hall of Residence for Women Students at University College, Bangor, is, unlike her brother, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, a High Church-woman. She has got into a row with the college authorities for making statements about one of the students, for which she was called upon to apologise. This she declined to do, and the Hall is now threatened with the withdrawal of its license.

Canon Driver is being tackled by a brother clergyman, the Rev. D. G. Whitley, on the question of Genesis and Science. Mr. Whitley says they agree. Dr. Driver says they don't. Mr. Whitley fires off quotations from Professor Dana, Sir J. W. Dawson, and other eminent geologists. Dr. Driver replies that he accepts the teaching of these masters of geological science, but he declines to follow them when they go outside their province and "violently force the language of Genesis into unnatural harmony with what geology and astronomy demand." On the interpretation of Hebrew the Canon claims to form his own opinion, which is certainly more authoritative than that of Dana and Dawson. "I part company from them," he says, "with regret; but I part from them, not on any question which concerns geology, but on the sense which they seem to affix to the narrative of Genesis I."

Nothing could be plainer than this. Dr. Driver bows to Dana and Dawson in geology, but whether their teachings agrees with Genesis depends on what Genesis really says, and to determine that belongs to the Hebraist, and not to the geologist. We repeat that Dr. Driver's attitude is not only just but perfectly plain. Anyone who does not understand it must be an imbecile.

Will it be believed, then, that the *Christian Commonwealth*, right on the heels of this quotation from Dr. Driver, actually writes as follows:—"It will be seen that Canon Driver brings a serious indictment of scientific worthlessness, for such it amounts to, against the very geologists whom he relies upon as being his scientific supports." Surely the writer of this sentence is not so foolish as to misunderstand Canon Driver's position; and the only alternative is that he deliberately misrepresents it. So much for the morals of Christian journalism.

The Rev. A. E. O. Harris, vicar of Stoke, near Rochester, has been tried under the Clergy Discipline Act on charges of being drunk while performing divine service and officiating at funerals. The Court found him guilty, and its finding is reported to the Bishop. The sentence is yet to be pronounced.

An enterprising Christian advertises in the *World's Exchange*. He wants to ease some other Christian of £5. In return he will help him to start a monthly magazine for "Christian men and women of all ages," which is sure to have a large circulation. Of course!

Uriah Wood, of Honiton, who is remanded on a charge of obtaining £40 by false pretences from Mary Ann Pitt, first met her at "some religious services in the City-road." The same old game.

Hilton Barker, the financial gentleman who has just committed suicide, in a spirit of Christian resignation, left a note for the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy, telling him "the Almighty" would show him up some day, and adding, "May my curse follow you." A nice pious gentleman this. All his pity was reserved for himself; never mind the poor ruined shareholders. And of such is the kingdom of heaven.

The Rev. W. J. Dawson has been preaching at Highbury Quadrant Church on the needs of London. Like the cobbler who proposed a leather wall, he thinks only his own class can supply needs. "Multiply churches, and London will be saved" says Mr. Dawson. What are the many churches it already possesses doing in this direction? Certainly they have not saved it from poverty, immorality or cant.

The Rev. F. W. Macdonald, of the Wesleyan Foreign Missionary Society, says that religion can "neither be written up nor written down." The religious, then, must have indulged in a prodigious quantity of waste effort.

There is a nice little quarrel at Battersea between the vicar of St. Andrews and his late curate, the Rev. Enoch Thomas, who was dismissed on a charge of having assaulted a young woman, while under the influence of drink. Mr. Thomas denies the charge, and says the vicar refused him any opportunity of clearing himself from the accusation.

The private motives of the Czar in continuing the persecution of Jews and Stundists is said to be to propitiate the favor of heaven by suppressing the enemies of the true faith. By way of answer come famine, brigandage, and a recrudescence of cholera in the Southern provinces.

The damage by the floods in Queensland is estimated at £1,000,000. Six hundred houses have been carried away and 2,000 more submerged, and furniture destroyed or injured. Many stocks of small shopkeepers and the crops of farmers are totally ruined. A nice outcome of over-much praying by umbrella-makers.

Some fearful and wonderful stuff is being contributed by the English Bishops, week after week, in *Lloyd's News*. Last week's was from the pen of the Bishop of Rochester. Such utter drivel, stuff to make a reasonable man sick, seems to show that the whole bench of bishops is suffering from softening of the brain. Perhaps they think they are writing for the taste of working men. If so, they are guiltily ignorant of the "flock" they have sworn to guard, and do nothing but fleeco.

Croesus—"How much did you say Mr. Newgold was down for?" The Minister—"Five hundred dollars, sir." Croesus—"Put me down for six hundred, then. In a matter of Christian charity I can't stand on a level with an upstart like him."

A FREETHOUGHT THEATRE.

WHILE the proselytising benefactions of Christians are pretty widely advertised, the unostentatious liberality of Freethinkers is less widely known. Another instance, however, of Freethought liberality comes from the United States, which already possesses in the Lick Observatory and the Girard Institute two splendid specimens of generous Secularism. The town of Dowagiac, in Michigan, has 4,000 inhabitants; it has grown up around a large stove-works created by the late Mr. P. D. Beckwith, a staunch Freethinker. Before his death he desired to erect a first-class theatre for first-class performances, in which the money-making element should be absent. His son-in-law, Mr. Fred Lee, and his other heirs have faithfully carried out the purpose which death prevented him from accomplishing. The new theatre, just completed, will seat 600 people and cost 150,000 dollars, or £30,000. It is of red brick, and outside is a frieze consisting of portraits in terra-cotta, bas reliefs of eminent writers, philosophers, artists and actors, special prominence being given in the selection to those who were Freethinkers. Shakespeare, Ingersoll, Voltaire, Paine, Susan B. Anthony, are among the portraits. The decorations inside are magnificent, the coloring starting with a delicate flesh color on the floor of the house, blending with a sea-green at the top. Every chair is upholstered in silk plush of light fawn, and there are handsome stained glass windows. The stage is large, the scenery complete, and the building is lit by the electric light. All this in a town of 4,000 people has excited much interest in the States. Col. Robert Ingersoll is to formally open the theatre by a lecture on Shakespeare, and to dedicate the building as a memorial to P. D. Beckwith and free—or, as our American friends put it, liberal—thought.

THE MODERN GOSPEL.

You may break the Ten Commandments in as many little bits
As Moses did, when coming down the mount;
You may scorn the major prophets, knock the minor into fits;
Such sinful little pleasantries doesn't count.

But if you want the Devil to claim you as his own,
And locate you on his very warmest perch,
Where, through eternal ages, you will frizzle as you groan;
Just commit some little sin against the Church!

You may gamble on a horse race, though a parson you may be,
Or at "company promoting" take a hand,
As a bankrupt without assets you may revel full and free,
And bring no disrepute upon your "band."

But if to quick perdition the shortest way you'd take
And find yourself for ever in the lurch;
Not one Divine commandment or counsel need you break,
But simply bid defiance to the Church!

—Society.

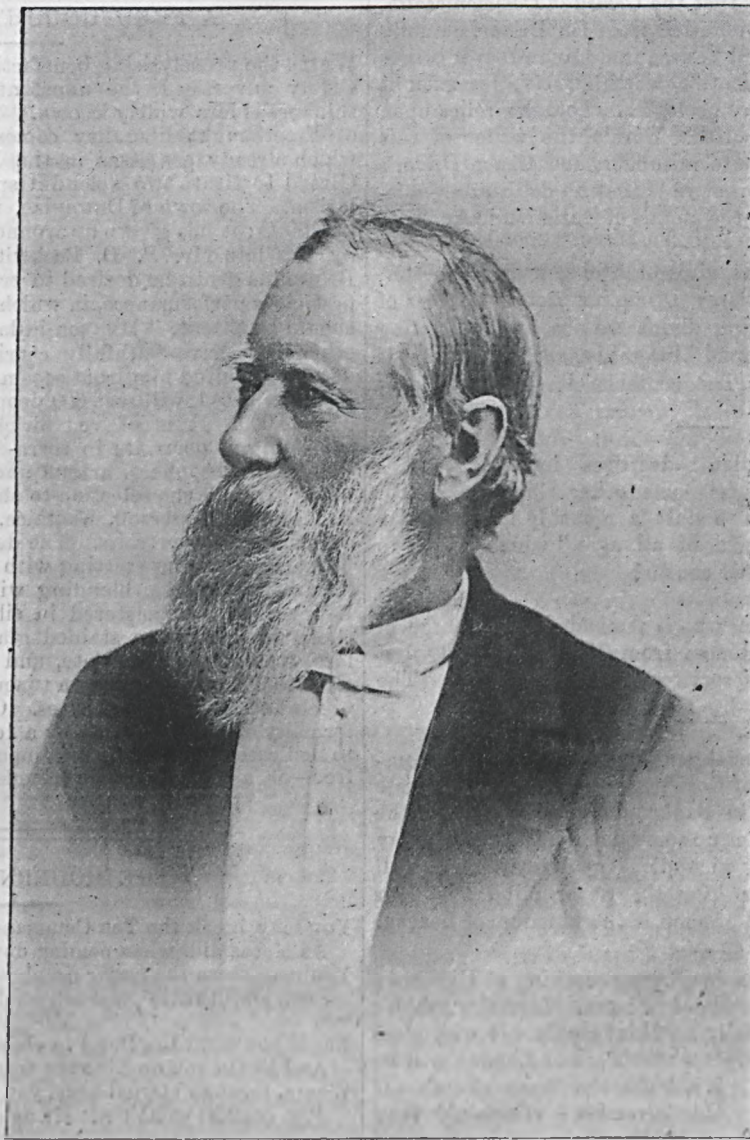
OBITUARY.

The Cheshire Branch of the N. S. S. has sustained a serious loss by the death, in his seventieth year, of Mr. Wm. James, of Crowe. The deceased was an engine driver on the London and North Western Railway. A Freethinker from his early manhood, he was highly respected by all classes. During his illness he was occasionally visited by the parson of the parish, theological questions being avoided on both sides, until the last few days of his illness, when the parson, taking advantage of his weak condition, attempted to make a prayer. The protest of the sick man resulted in the parson's speedy removal to the street. Deceased was one of the personal friends of Mr. Bradlaugh, and, like him, was buried without any ceremony at the grave. A short address was delivered by the writer over the coffin before leaving the residence of the deceased.—CHAS. LEWIS.

Weakness, fear, melancholy, together with ignorance are the true sources of superstition.—Hume.

Hope, pride, presumption, a warm imagination, together with ignorance are the true sources of enthusiasm.—Hume.

True philosophy teaches a man to take life as it is and make the most of it, the most of all its ingredients too. That is the only philosophy worthy of the name. To be senseless or unfeeling is to be less than a man; to suffer and yet live and do one's duty is real manhood; to feel the stings of fortune and still to proceed is courage and resolution worthy of a great character; to whine and fret is to increase our sorrows and to neglect our duties, that is the sure way to make life a wretched failure.—J. Symes.



GEORGE ANDERSON.

GEORGE ANDERSON.

GEORGE ANDERSON did not want his portrait to appear—at any rate for the present. He thought there were many others entitled to precedence. But we thought otherwise, and as our word is law (in the *Freethinker*) he had to submit. Mr. Anderson is a quiet Freethinker, but a sturdier one does not walk this planet. He has stated in our columns, in appealing on behalf of the Hall of Science scheme, how intensely he admired Charles Bradlaugh. How substantially he supported his great leader will, we hope, be some day disclosed (though it never will be by himself), if only as a stimulus to other

Freethinkers who are in a position to emulate his example. Mr. Anderson was not a mere "Bradlaughite," however; and his generous support of Freethought is still continued. Only a week or two ago we published his noble offer to give £300 if the Hall of Science scheme is supported to the extent of 3,000 shares, fairly paid up, within the next six months. Mr. Anderson is a Scotchman, and has all the stubborn tenacity of his race; he has also that inexhaustible vein of kindness which often makes a business Scotchman such a complicated problem. He is declining into the vale of years, but still hale and hearty, and we hope he will live to see Freethought achieve the position he thinks it should occupy, and which it soon *would* occupy if it had twenty George Andersons instead of one.

THE FIGHT AT HULL.

By the time this number of the *Freethinker* is on sale I shall be on my way to Hull. I am billed to speak there on Thursday night. The hall is engaged for a week. Mr. Charles Watts, besides being rather unwell, is engaged at Sheffield. Other lecturers cannot leave London on week days. I shall therefore conduct the mission alone, addressing free meetings on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Monday, and charging for admission to the lectures on Sunday. Messrs. Billany and Thompson met me at Grimsby on Sunday, and we arranged all the details of the business together. Special bills will be printed for the Sunday lectures, and I shall see that the Chief Constable gets one of them, so that he may not "lie low" on the pretence of ignorance. Next week I shall give a full account of the proceedings. If the police take action I shall be

involved in an expensive struggle and shall need the fullest support of the Freethought party. If they do not take action, the Week's Mission, which is necessitated by the peculiar conditions of the case, will involve a considerable cost, which I cannot bear personally.

G. W. FOOTE.

President, N.S.S.

Messrs. Lawrence and Bullen have published a collection of some of Mr. Grant Allen's recent articles under the title of *Science in Arcady*.

* * *

The Congregation of the Index has placed on their *Librorum Prohibitorum* a volume recently published in Paris and Brussels, with the title of *The Idea of God according to Anthropology and History*. This should be interesting to the trustees of the Hibbert Society, for the volume is but a summary of the lectures delivered in England under their auspices. Thanks to the advertisement of being placed on the Index, it will doubtless have a large sale, and may perhaps even re-appear in an English dress.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

March 5, Hull; 12, Leeds; 16, Hammersmith; 19, Hall of Science; 26, Manchester. April 2 and 9, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—March 1, 2, 3, Sheffield; 5, Birmingham; 12, Hall of Science, London; 19, Bristol; 26, 27 and 28, Glasgow. April 2 and 9, Birmingham; 16 and 23, Hall of Science, London; 30, Sheffield. May 7 and 14, Birmingham; 28, Hall of Science, London. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him (with stamped envelope for reply) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

DISGUSTED CHRISTIAN (Belfast).—We cannot deal with anonymous letters. Name and address must be given, though not necessarily for publication.

LIVERPOOL.—The writer was only using a fashion of speech, and meant nothing immaterial by "a soul loved and admired." Do you object to "genius" because it once meant an attendant spirit?

A. B. D. can obtain the *Freethinker* every Sunday in Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, and Duke-street, Manchester-square, and James-street, Oxford-street, W.

ADELPHOS.—The genuineness of the Moabite stone was attacked by a Jewish gentleman, Mr. Lowvy, in the *Scottish Review*, but it is generally accepted. A forger would probably have made the inscription more accord with Jewish and orthodox prejudices.

J. S. M.—The nearest approach to the passage we can find is Ezekiel vii. 2, "An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land." Rev. vii. 1 speaks of four angels standing on the four corners of the earth.

The *Freethinker* and all Freethought literature can be obtained from W. Redhead, 3 Whitwell-road, Plaistow, E., and 27 King David-lane, Shadwell, E.

B. A. MILLICHAMP.—Better leave him alone; you only make the running for him; and as he will not debate with a leading representative Freethinker, it is a very one-sided business. It was a very cheap boast on his part to say "Let Mr. Watts write to me, and I will tell him my answer." He knows that Mr. Watts would never stoop to do it. It is the last refuge of fear. If you leave him alone until he will debate, his Birmingham audience of 60 people will not much increase.

J. BURRELL.—Always glad to help in that way.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Received with thanks. The joke is a very old one in a partially new dress.

T. CHARLTON.—Thanks for cuttings. Will write on other matter.

W. H. (Oldham).—As the Almanack you refer to is three years old it is hardly worth while to trouble about the matter. Libels on Thomas Paine do not suffer by contradiction. They will die as people learn the truth. The "debauched life" of this great Freethinker is a pious imagination, but it has a fine career before it still; for, as Ingersoll says, nothing in this world flourishes like a good, sound, healthy religious lie.

D. H. (Edinburgh).—Read Paine's *Age of Reason*, Bradlaugh's *Genesis*, Wheeler's *Bible Studies*; then *Crimes of Christianity*; afterwards such books, if you can get them, as *Supernatural Religion*, Grog's *Creed of Christendom*, and Giles's *Hebrew and Christian Records*—which may be accessible in your public library.

MILLY HEARNDEN (Maidstone), a little lady of nine, has collected the following for the Children's Party at the London Hall of Science:—R. W. H. 6d., K. H. 5d., A. H. 6d., A. C. 6d., W. B. 6d., R. H. 6d., Milly H. 6d., J. H. 6d., J. M. 6d., M. M. 6d., W. M. 6d., A. H. 1s Total 7s.

HUMANITAS (Dublin), who is thus known as the author of several interesting Freethought pamphlets, in sending us a subscription for the Hull Fight, says it is evident that the object in such cases is to make Freethought lectures a financial failure. Yes, that's about it. First, we are not allowed to take dead men's money; next, we are not allowed to take living men's money; and thus they propose to starve our propaganda. But they won't succeed.

HULL FIGHTING FUND.—Alpha 1s., Humanitas 5s.; collected at Grimsby, £1 3s. 2d.

W. P. REDFERN.—Glad to hear you like our special numbers so greatly. Issuing a supplement, as you suggest, would not help us. It would only be publishing (in reality) a second paper at the same price, and with the same weekly loss; two burdens, in fact, instead of one. Otherwise your suggestion is worth considering.

W. O. AINSWORTH.—We are willing to look at the M.S. if you forward it, with stamped envelope for possible return.

JOSEPH BROWN.—Thanks for cuttings and cheerful letter. The N.S.S. Executive has voted £5 for the N.E. Secular Federation. See "Sugar Plums."

A. J. H.—The mistake is rectified this week.

FAIRPLAY.—Never believe what Christians say about Freethinkers. As a rule, in such cases, they have as much

ethical feeling as a tiger looking for his dinner. We explained, several weeks ago, the collapse of the negotiations for a debate at Spennymoor. The general question was to be "Has Man a Soul?" Mr. Howard drew up the proposition he would maintain, and Mr. Foote did the same; but Mr. Howard's committee wanted to edit Mr. Foote's proposition—that is, they wanted him to word it to their liking. He declined to do so, and refused to discuss with them. Mr. Foote's committee did not even send him the demand of Mr. Howard's committee; it was so absurd that they would not waste their time upon it. Mr. Foote has had several debates with Dr. Harrison, Dr. Sexton, Dr. McCann, the Rev. J. M. Logan, etc., and he never found any trouble in negotiations when the other side wanted to debate.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—Le Raisin—Church Reformer—Islington Gazette—Printer's Ink—Manchester Saturday Telegram—Christian Commonwealth—Staffordshire Sentinel—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Progressive Thinker.

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

The *Freethinker* (including the twopenny special number for the first week in each month) will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 7s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 9d.; Three Months, 1s. 10½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements:*—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 19s. Special terms for repetitions.



DANIEL BAKER.

TO-DAY (March 5) is Daniel Baker's seventy-eighth birthday. To say that time is not telling upon him would be a foolish falsehood; nevertheless he is wonderfully sprightly for his age, and his interest in Secularism is as keen and warm as ever. Birmingham Secularism owes more than we can recite to Daniel Baker. Ever since we first visited the capital of the Midlands he has been the mainstay of the Secular party there. His generosity provided and maintained Baskerville Hall, and his character has shed honor and dignity upon the cause. All his life he has been a friend of progressive movements. To a shrewd head he unites a tender heart; his liberality is as broad as his intelligence. Justice is hardly done to him by the above portrait. It is from a photograph taken ten years ago. This was the only one Mr. Baker could send us, and the engravers have done the best they could with it. Unfortunately it would not bear being enlarged. He and Mrs. Baker, as well as his old friends, will understand this, and make any necessary allowance. We should like to see a fine portrait of Daniel Baker, to be preserved in Baskerville Hall (or elsewhere) when his long day's work is done.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Noah's Flood was nearly repeated on Sunday at Grimsby, and Mr. Foote's audiences suffered somewhat in consequence. It was a wonder to find any audience at all in the morning and afternoon. A fair number, however, braved the weather, and their attendance was a compliment to the lecturer. The chairmen during the day were Messrs. G. Alward, N. B. Billany (of Hull), and J. Alward. A considerable number of ladies were present in the evening.

About eighty persons sat down to a five o'clock tea, which was excellently served. At the conclusion of the repast, brief speeches were made by Messrs. G. Alward, J. Alward, Billany, Manton, and S. Alward. Mr. G. Alward, councillor and magistrate, proposed a vote of confidence in Mr. Foote as President of the N. S. S., and of assurance that he would be supported, at least by Grimsby, in any enterprise for the welfare or protection of the Society. This was carried with unanimity and enthusiasm.

We are happy to learn that the sale of the *Freethinker* steadily increases in Grimsby. Mr. Wittering, the Branch secretary, who is also a newsagent, with a shop in the main thoroughfare, began with sixteen copies four years ago and has now reached fifty. The improvement has been slow but sure, which shows that the paper is making its way on its merits.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured on Sunday last at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. We are glad to hear that he had an excellent and enthusiastic audience in the evening, when he exposed the fallacy of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. There was a spirited debate, and Mr. Watts delighted those present with his effective reply to his opponent. The *Freethinker* had a good sale, and the orders for the special number were numerous. Mr. Watts lectures again in the same hall to-day (March 5).

We call the special attention of our friends in Wolverhampton and the surrounding district to the debate which is to take place to-morrow (Monday, March 6) at the Exchange Hall, Wolverhampton, at 7.45, between Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. R. E. Dell (member of the Guild of St. Matthew, London, and Christian Socialist), on "Has the Church been a Greater Factor to Human Progress than Secularism?" This is a good opportunity for Freethinkers to hear Mr. Watts as a debater, and we trust all who can will support him by their attendance.

The *Boston Investigator*, noticing our first special number, remarks: "We are glad to see this evidence of prosperity on the part of our English contemporary, and rejoice that Mr. Foote is at length enjoying somewhat the fruits of a lifelong battle for liberty of brain and liberty of man—which he has most nobly earned. May his subscription list increase in proportion to the merits of his journal."

We see from the *Boston Investigator* that Mr. Ernest Mendum, now proprietor of that paper, has been delivering his first lecture in Paine Hall, Boston. His subject was "The Immorality of Christianity." Mr. Mendum bears an honored name, and we are delighted to know he is bent on carrying on the battle so gallantly fought by his father.

Mr. J. P. Hopps has been speaking out well in the *Echo* on the question of religion Board schools. As Mr. Hopps is one of the few Nonconformists who stand on a definite principle, we have pleasure in reproducing his remarks. He says:—"The only safe and sound principle is that a public institution, established for the public, paid for by the public, used by the public, and managed by the public, should keep clear of sectional matters. The public school ought to be a purely 'secular' institution, for the transaction of a perfectly well-defined bit of secular work; and, but for sectarian interests and personal wishes, it would be universally seen that what people call 'religious instruction' has no more right to intrude into the public schools than into the public baths."

North Eastern Secular Federation—Subscriptions received: Hubert Richardson, £1 13s.; per H. Richardson, £1 10s.; per S. M. Peacock, £2; Cap Proft, 1s. 6d.; M., 10s.; Shields Friends, 12s. 9d.; A Friend, 1s.; Chester-le-Street Branch,

9s. 9d.; Ebchester Branch, 1s. 9d.—Joseph Brown (secretary), 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Bigotry has received a snub at Hanley. At the recent quarterly meeting of the Town Council, a recommendation of the Town Hall Committee was read to the effect that the Secular Society should be granted the use of Victoria Hall on Sunday, May 21, for their annual meeting, on the usual terms and conditions. This was opposed by Mr. Wood, who spoke of the "harmful tendency" of Secularism, especially to the "young." The Mayor, however, begged to differ from Mr. Wood. He said they did not want orthodox bells rang in the Council chamber; they were not the judges of other men's opinions, and Secularists had a just claim to be treated like other citizens. The committee's recommendation was adopted by 17 votes to 9—nearly two to one.

The Westminster and Lambeth Branches held a Conversation on Sunday. There were short speeches, and recitations were contributed by Messrs. Ross, Simms, Martin, H. Stace, E. Stace, and Wheeler. A most enjoyable evening was spent. Thanks are due to Mr. Horne for placing the room at the Branch's disposal.

The French Committee of Moral Studies, send us an *Essai sur l'Education Laïque*. It is published at the low price of fifteen centimes (three halfpence), and should command a large sale.

Dr. T. R. Allinson, the well-known medical man who was turned out by the Doctors' Trade Union, is one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents. He lectures to-night (March 5) for the Battersea Branch at Chatham Hall on "Food and Feeding"—a subject on which he is a specialist.

Mr. A. B. Moss occupies the London Hall of Science platform this evening (March 5), his subject being, "My Path from Superstition to Freethought." We hope there will be a good attendance.

Next Friday evening (March 10) the friendly discussion between the Rev. C. Fleming Williams and Mr. G. W. Foote takes place at the Hall of Science, London. Mr. Williams is an alderman of the London County Council, a popular Nonconformist minister, and an advanced politician and social reformer. The subject to be discussed is "Christian Views of Man and Methods of Progress." Admission to the meeting will be free, with a collection to defray the necessary expenses. A big gathering is expected. All who want seats should come early.

RUSTIC PSALMODY.

A congregation would be heard lustily proclaiming their defiance of the decalogue in "I love to steal—I love to steal," while all they meant to do was "to steal a while away" to some imaginary realm of spiritual blessedness. "Stir up this stu—stir up this stu," was only the "fuguing" form of "Stir up this stupid heart to pray."

And so with "And take thy pil—and take thy pilgrim home." "My poor pol—my poor pol—my poor polluted heart," "And more eggs—more eggs—and more exalt our joys," "I love the bat—I love thee better than before," "And catch the flee—and catch the fleeting hour," and many more entertaining instances of perverted sense in song.

Two trebles sang, "And learn to kiss": two trebles and alto, "And learn to kiss": two trebles, alto, and tenor, "And learn to kiss": bass solus, "the rod."

With reverence let the saints appear
And bow before the Lord,

became "And bow—wow—wow, and bow—ow—ow," and so on until treble, alto, tenor, and bass (base enough in all conscience!) had bow-wowed themselves hoarse and perceptibly apoplectic.—*Cornhill Magazine*.

Harry is frequently so sleepy at nights that it is hard work for him to say his prayers. On one or two occasions his mother had felt obliged to spur him on to greater energy by telling him to speak up so that "God and she could hear him." She was recently somewhat shocked after one of her repeated admonitions to hear him say, straightening himself up in bed, "O mother, you and God just make me tired."

HINTS TO DEBATERS.

WHEN the wise men met in Greece in the winter and filled the air with words of wisdom, the words became frozen; but when summer came, they thawed, and everybody heard them. In modern times the press answers the same beneficent purpose—the thoughts of men are accessible to the lowliest born as well as to the aristocracy of wealth or intellect. If we have but a crude political republic, we have to-day a genuine one of letters.

In my time I have been present at the birth of many debating societies, and had the honor of making the first speech. It may be useful to recall some of the words spoken on those occasions. As these societies one by one disappear, and are followed by new ones in every generation, a few words of advice may be of interest to the rising generation concerned with them. The value of debate, like everything else, depends on conditions. To be a useful member of a debating society, a young man should first study grammar and logic as well as read the books of the best writers. That is, before he talks in public, he should learn to talk correctly, and have something to say worth listening to. The society should be the school in which to learn to say things well and to the point, to say the right thing at the right time. With some exceptions, this art of thinking while standing in the face of critics and opponents has to be acquired by practice. Born orators, like born poets, are few in number. It is not merely the ability to talk that has to be acquired (for that children and parrots can do), but the ability to say something, and say it well. This is more important than is generally recognised. A man may have vast stores of information without the capacity to impart it in public speech. It has often appeared to me a great anomaly that men from our universities with M.A., B.A., or D.D. after their names, should be incapable of reading and speaking in public so as to be heard and understood. This seems the more remarkable because it is known that their function in life is to do the very thing in which they appear to have had but little training.

In these days of schools and debating societies it should be considered a reproach to a young man to talk all his life without learning to talk accurately and to some useful end. Debate wakens the senses and sharpens the judgment. As all our knowledge comes by comparison, it must follow that truth may be elicited by statements being made by different speakers, and compared by different minds, that look at questions from different points of view. There is only one class of people who need avoid debate or eschew public discussion—those who cannot listen to contradictions, fearing the truth may come out of the conflict. One thing is obvious—those who listen to only one side may go wrong all their lives. They do not avail themselves of the only or chief means of avoiding erroneous conclusions.

To be free from doubt or perplexity, hear only one side, and that will also ensure ignorance and stupidity. Those who admit or expect some good may arise from debate may still be open to suggestions as to how it should be conducted. I take it as a matter beyond dispute that a man's conclusions, arrived at after free and fair discussion, are better worth attention, and that he will make a better citizen, than one who has made no inquiries, but has swallowed his opinions in a lump and rushed to conclusions with a jump. But men vary in their degrees of industry and patience. Temperaments differ, impatience prevails among those whose master is knowledge. Self-control, regard for others, tolerance of differences, are among the benefits derivable from debate, especially early in life, before all our conclusions appear to be written by unerring sunbeams.

It may be admitted that advice on this as on other subjects is more easily given than followed. Be that as it may, it appears to me best that there *should* be, in all discussions, honesty and sincerity, soft words and hard arguments. The person who knows the facts on any question, and knows how to state them, is sure to be master in any free and fair fight. Loud talk and vituperation are not desirable or essential. Avoid pretending to knowledge. There are two ways of sustaining an argument: one is by submitting facts within our own knowledge, and the other on the authority of those who have ascertained the facts on the question. The one who uses either of these methods has nothing to fear from the floundering and blundering of his opponents. The great point is, in quoting, to be able to verify, give chapter and verse.

A brief rule for young beginners is,—Get your point, keep your point, clear your point, and then sit down. The latter is important, as many persons neglect to leave off when they have finished. It is the best policy to combat opinions, not persons; however gifted with wit or sarcasm, to avoid saying spiteful things, all bitterness of speech. By this it is not intended that solemnity and stupidity are more befitting debate than wit and lively repartee. One of the best aids to a well-conducted debate is to get well prepared before you begin it.

A young friend of mine used to occasion much merriment by telling us going home what might have been said with advantage! But that is not the way to influence discussion; to do that, as I have intimated, the right thing must be said at the right time, and in the right way.

It is desirable to master the definite meanings of terms that always crop up in debates, such as logic, evidence, facts, argument, inference, proof, truth, error, science, etc. A clearly defined notion of the true import of words may shorten discussion, but it greatly increases its value. This elementary knowledge of the meaning of words not only adds interest to listeners, but clearness and simplicity save much time when the speakers themselves know exactly what they mean. Young beginners will do well to strive to say the most they can in the least time, for, though verbosity may be entertaining, it is not necessarily instructive. In much council there may be wisdom, but in much talking there is generally a great deal of nonsense. Many of the best sayings have been compressed into a single sentence.

Many people use two or three words to explain one, but a good debater does not repeat himself; he never uses two words when one is sufficient to convey his meaning.

These few hints may not appear very profound, but they will be found useful when practically applied. Simple as they are, if they are adhered to they will render meetings pleasant, make it possible for some to know more at the end than at the beginning, or have their minds directed to some new aspect of things. If they are not needed, so much the better.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

THE CURATE.

O GENTLE boy, with smooth, white brow,
I would I were cocksure as thou!
So well you clear away all doubt,
So plainly point our pathway out;
So well you tell us what is truth,
And probe the hearts of age and youth.
O gentle boy, with smooth, white brow,
I would I were cocksure as thou!

You prattle of the earth, the sea,
And life that is, and is to be;
You sit on Huxley's latest fad,
And prove all pessimism bad.
Things we found hard to understand
We take on trust at your command.
Alas! I'm sixty-five, no, now,
I ne'er can be cocksure as thou.

—*Pull Mall Gazette.*

ANDANTE.

Josephus, Clement, and many Christian fathers declared that in their own day the statue of Lot's wife remained, and even, the shocking old fathers declared, gave signs of femininity. A little girl on a cattle ranch would have confuted them. Told the story at Sunday-school the teacher ended the tale by saying, "For all they knew the pillar of salt may be there now." "Was that a cattle country?" asked the girl. "I think so." "Well, let me tell you those cattle would have licked her up long ago."

The evasion of Bible difficulties by our Christian Evidence friends puts us in mind of the story of the negro preacher who, touched by "higher criticism," once elaborated a new theory of the Exodus,—to wit, that the Red Sea was frozen over, and so afforded the Israelites a safe passage; but, when Pharaoh, with his heavy iron chariots, attempted to cross he broke through, and was drowned. A brother arose and asked an explanation of that "p'int." Said he: "I's been studyin' g'ography, and de g'ography say dat am de place whar the tropics am, and de tropics am too hot for freezing. De p'int to be 'splained is 'bout breakin' through de ice." The preacher straightened himself up, and said: "Brudder, glad you axed dat question, for it gives me 'casion to 'splain it. You see dat war a great while ago, befo' they had any g'eographies, and befo' dere war any tropics."

THE ATHEIST OF GLENROY.

THE most trifling ecclesiastical matter, whether it appertains to Church discipline or some doctrinal point, throws a Highland village into convulsions of excitement. A death, a birth, or a marriage are occurrences which are completely eclipsed by a question affecting either the orthodoxy of the minister or any of the members of the church. Occasionally this religious bigotry leads to serious, and in the present instance, tragic results. Three years ago the straggling village of Glenroy, at the foot of the Grampians, found itself one morning in the throes of a religious upheaval. The minister discovered, posted on the entrance door to the manse, a document which ran as follows:—"Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

This scathing scriptural injunction was regarded by the Rev. Mr. M'Fadyn and his family as an insult which must be resented, and the reverend gentleman put himself in communication with the local policeman and sanitary inspector of Glenroy. The officer subjected the document to a minute criticism, but failed to throw any light on the subject. It was then handed to the blacksmith, an expert in the detection of handwriting, but he too failed to identify the caligraphy. Suspicion, however, centred itself on the person of John Grant, the carpenter of Glenroy. The minister was a fussy, excitable body, and the custodian of all the gossip in the place. His sermons were of the milk-and-water order—thin, shallow, and lacking vitality.

Grant had a monopoly of joiner work in the village. He was young, not more than two and twenty, a good workman, a voracious reader, and the possessor of a strong, healthy brain. He had been in Glenroy for a couple of years, and during that time he had proved himself sober, steady, and industrious, and even the gossips failed to point to a single flaw in his moral character. His only infirmity was weak eyes, largely due to continuous reading. In the village he was highly respected, and held an office in the church. Grant had a young wife and child. Both were delicate and ill-equipped for bearing up against misfortunes. Mrs. Grant and her husband loved each other with a love that could only be suppressed with death. They were comfortable and happy in Glenroy, and out of his earnings Grant had succeeded in transforming their cottage into one of the cosiest in the village.

He, however, had incurred the displeasure of the Rev. Mr. M'Fadyn. In Glenroy, as in most villages now, there was a debating society which held its weekly meetings in the schoolhouse, and those responsible for drafting the syllabus for the session stupidly, I think, placed on the paper for discussion, the question whether the Mosaic account of creation was reconcilable with the discoveries of modern geological science.

The result of the discussions on this particularly controversial subject not only ruined Grant's prospects in the village, but eventually, as the sequel will show, killed him. The Rev. Mr. M'Fadyn was one of the audiences, and at the outset, before the discussion began, expressed regret that such a subject should have been selected by the committee. He thought that a vote of censure should be passed upon the members. The discussion of such a question, he said, could be productive of nothing but evil, and he would be greatly astonished if any of those present would have the hardihood to take the negative side in the debate.

Grant was one of the members of the committee, and it was to him that Mr. M'Fadyn's remarks were directed. Despite, however, the sneers of the cleric, the carpenter launched out for the irreconcilability of the Bible with science. He had dipped deeply into the works of Darwin, Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, and after quoting from the writings of these scientists, he had the audacity to clinch his arguments by reading an extract from the writings of the great French Freethinker and satirist, Voltaire.

Mr. M'Fadyn was horrified. No more unsettling speech had ever been delivered in Glenroy, and the minister denounced the carpenter there and then as a materialist of the blackest dye. That debate, as I have said, sealed the doom of Grant in the village. Although he would not recant any of the opinions expressed by him, Grant admitted to his intimate friends that he had committed a blunder, that he was injudicious in speaking as he did.

A meeting of the kirk session was convened, and the carpenter was deposed from office, and from that day forward he absented himself from the weekly ministrations of Mr. M'Fadyn. The minister refused to administer the rite of baptism to his child, even though Grant's young wife with tearful eyes went Nicodemus-like to the manse to plead with him. If the carpenter were a criminal of the worst type, he could not have been subjected to coarser social ostracism. His friends shunned him in the streets, and to strangers he was pointed out as the "Atheist" of Glenroy. He bore the oneliness of the situation so far as it concerned himself with

equanimity, but when his delicate wife was spurned by her neighbors for his indiscretion, it occurred to him that he had reached a crisis in his life.

It was shortly after Mr. M'Fadyn refused to christen the child that the notice appeared on the manse door. Suspicion, as I have said, fell on Grant, although subsequently he denied any knowledge of it. The villagers, however, believe that he wrote it and posted it on the door, and the minister aided in giving the belief credence. Grant's business began to dwindle. The people of the village first gave him the cold shoulder and then the surrounding farmers, upon whom he mainly relied, boycotted him and went with their work several miles rather than employ as they phrased it in Gaelic "the arch Atheist of Glenroy."

Eight months had passed since Grant was put under the clerical boycott, four of which he had been completely idle. One morning he told his wife that he had decided to quit the village and try his luck in Glasgow. She neither expressed approval nor disapproval of his resolution. The ready cash they had was exhausted, and as a last resort he determined to dispose of his furniture by public roup—the only method which the Highlander has in getting rid of his effects when migrating to any part of the country.

Bills with a list of the effects were extensively posted throughout the district, and on a certain day the auctioneer put in an appearance at the carpenter's cottage. The hour for commencing the sale came round, but not a solitary purchaser turned up. Grant understood the situation. He paid the auctioneer his fee, and the carpenter, despondent but not without courage, entered his cottage. The following day a broker from a neighboring town bought Grant's furniture, and that same evening the Atheist and his wife and child were en route for Glasgow.

The furniture realised some seven or eight pounds, and with this small pittance Grant began a struggle for life in Glasgow in December of 1890. He secured a one-room house in the Cowcaddens, amongst a class of people as wretched and degraded as that of Glenroy was bigoted and intolerant. It was a great change for Mrs. Grant and her little child. The language of the slums grated harshly on her ears, and even the deep silence of Glenroy, with the taunts and jeers of its people, were a thousand times preferable to her life in the Cowcaddens.

Grant searched day after day for work, without any success. He had no friends to whom he could appeal for advice, and the rough country work to which he was accustomed seriously interfered with his chances of securing employment in the city. The mother pined for the country, and the bright smile of the child was gone, and its place taken by an oddly grave and eager look. They were reduced to the verge of destitution, and "near a thousand tables pined and wanted food." Worst of all, and as if meant to fill their cup of misery to the brim, the baby was taken ill with the measles, and in less than twenty-four hours had passed away to a land far away beyond the remotest stars, where there is neither hail nor snow, and the winds blow over gently. This was a sad blow to the parents, and mother and father were completely bowed down with sorrow. While Grant and Mrs. Grant were seated in silence round the fireless grate the day after the death of the child, a knock was heard at the door. Grant answered it. It was a missionary.

"May I come in?" he asked in subdued tones. "I might be able in some slight way to comfort you?"

"You can render me no service, sir, and therefore please do not disturb us in our sorrow," the carpenter said, in a quiet but tremulous voice.

"Would you not permit me to offer a prayer? The poor mother might derive some comfort if you wouldn't," continued the missionary.

"Prayer for what?" said Grant, fiercely, his eyes gleaming like coals of fire, and his brows knit. "Is it," he went on, with great rapidity, and in a loud, despairing voice, "because I have been robbed of my child, my first born and only one, that you would pray? Your profession has blasted my life and murdered my child. Please go away!" and he closed the door.

That evening all that was left of the furniture was disposed of. The house was literally dispossessed of every article; but the child, Grant afterwards remarked, was "decently buried." The following day man and wife separated. Grant's eyes completely failed him, and he saw that he would have been more of a burden to his faithful wife than a help. She fortunately obtained admission into a home of industry in the city, and she has remained there ever since, bearing a name that is irreproachable.

The carpenter drifted to the low lodging-houses in the centre of the city. Despair and sorrow wrecked him. He had a racking cough, which even the rough inmates of the lodging-houses where he put up at refused to submit to. In the spring he was admitted to the Western Infirmary, ostensibly to get cured of his cough, but, as it turned out, to die. When the apple trees were in blossom in Glenroy, and the daisies and bluebells covered the dales, the spirit of "the Atheist" went out to him who gave it.—*Glasgow Weekly Mail.*

BOOK CHAT.

OLD BOOK STALLS.

The Farringdon-road costermongers have lately had a fight with the City Corporation, and they have come off victorious—at least for the present. Many of their stalls, especially fruit stalls, are pitched right outside the new Vegetable Market, in which the Corporation has invested a fabulous sum of money, and which seems to be a melancholy failure. At any rate, it is not yet a second Covent Garden.

Right in the middle of these fruit and sweetstuff and miscellaneous stalls, varied with medicine stands (pills inclusive) that have a marvellous fascination for people who don't look much out of sorts; right in the middle of them, we say, is a bookstall kept by Mr. Roberts, who has led the costermongers in their triumphant struggle. Mr. Roberts is not a young man, but he is hale-looking and straight as a bolt. There is a touch of the Gipsy about him; he would be an appropriate figure, in smart velvet corduroy, at the tail of a Gipsy van. He knows something about books, and has sold uncounted tons to the passers-by. Sometimes his stall has little but rubbish on it; at other times there are some good volumes; and occasionally you may pick up a "find." It was Mr. Roberts, I believe, who once sold an original Shelley (I forget the precise poem) for a few pence, for which the lucky purchaser realised several times as many pounds.

Mr. Roberts is all alone in his glory (as a bookseller) in that part of the Farringdon-road; but higher up, towards Clerkenwell-road, against the dead wall of the Metropolitan cutting, there is a long procession of old bookstalls, which has increased of late years, and now threatens to extend to a point at which the salesmen will have to ballot for places.

Nature is infinitely various. She knows nothing about "equality." As a matter of fact no two men are alike. Every man in the world is really unique; there never was one like him before, and there never will be one like him again. Variety is to be seen among these bookstall men as well as elsewhere—perhaps more so; and the contrast is as great on the barrows as among the owners—or rather the owners of the books, for, we believe, the barrows are mostly hired. There is the millionaire stall-keeper who has books worth five shillings, and sometimes more. He comes out only on special days, like Saturday, when people are flush of money. There is also the poor stall-keeper, who despairs of pricing his stock separately, and puts a penny ticket on "the blooming lot." There is likewise the inter-trading stall-keeper—the middleman of the trade, so to speak—who buys of the others and sells at a profit; turning an honest penny out of his superior knowledge of a certain class of books.

Bibliophilism—some people call it bibliomania—is an absorbing passion. The bibliophile cannot enter a library without sampling the books, sometimes beyond what Charles Lamb would call "an allowable freedom." Even a street bookstall attracts him. Ten to one there is nothing there he wants, but then there is the odd chance, and after all the things are books; poor, humble, obscure, time-worn and ragged, but still relatives, however distant, of the sovereign volumes of famous collections.

The bibliophile stops, examines volume after volume, and at last finds he has wasted half an hour. Generally speaking, that is; for occasionally he will find something worth buying; but when all is said and done, if he reckons his time worth anything, his best bargains are seldom very cheap.

But the bibliophile is not so much after bargains as discoveries, and books he never (or hardly ever) could meet with in a shop or a catalogue, turn up on these stalls. The present writer, for instance, who is an admirer of old John Donne, grave and magisterial Donne,

as Browning calls him, could not for love or money procure a copy of his rare *Ignatius's Conclave*; but one day, passing the procession of stalls in a hurry, he darted at one for a moment, and picked up a shabby duodecimo, and lo! it contained the very thing sought for during many years in vain, with the *Problems and Paradoxes and Essays on Divinity*. Fourpence made the hurried bibliophile the owner of this treasure.

Sometimes you may pick up a dirt-cheap folio. These stately volumes seldom go beyond a shilling. The purchaser does his own carriage, and the labor counts in the bargain. A finely printed *L'Adone* by Marino, or Andrewes on the Commandments, or Gordon's *Tacitus*, is worth carrying away at the price.

Perhaps you light on a more modern book you have long wanted; not worth a high price, perhaps, but out of print and unprocurable. Sometimes it is worth a good price. What is that shabby quarto with no title outside? You look at the

title-page, take a shilling out of your pocket, and walk off with Sir William Drummond's *Academical Questions*.

Here is an original edition of Berkeley's *Sirius* for two-pence; here a copy of Grenville's *Maxims and Characters*—one of the few English books of that species worth reading—for threepence; here is Anthony Collins's *Essay on Free-thinking* for sixpence, and there Bentley's slashing but shallow reply for the same amount; here is the rare *Spirit of Love*, by William Law, for fourpence; here is the fifth edition, carefully revised and corrected, of the *Dissertation on Parties*, by Caleb D'Anvers, Esq. (Lord Bolingbroke), with the fine symbolic frontispiece, which you don't get in the collected editions—price twopence; here is a duodecimo prose volume by old Quarles for threepence—ininitely better reading than you would expect after Dr. Johnson's criticism.

Room is lacking to expatiate on this tempting subject. We therefore close with a hope that the "progress of improvement" will long spare the street bookstalls in London. They make no litter and no noise, and they circulate cheap volumes, often of an edifying as well as interesting character, among a multitude of persons who would seldom enter a bookshop—to say nothing of the bibliophile, who, being a harmless if irrational creature, may claim a little consideration from his more reasonable fellow citizens, who do not condescend from "business" to such trifles as his weak brain affects.

THEOLOGY AND THEFT.

WHEN some poor wretch by hunger driven,
Snatches another's purse, he's given
From three to six months' "hard," because
His crime is known to British laws
As "common thieving."

But when a canting Pharisee,
Afire with vile cupidity,
Extorts, in sweet Religion's name,
A fortune from his friend, the game
Is "Christian brotherhood."

The man who breaks through bars and locks
Into another's house, and knocks
The laws of property aside
By annexation, must be tried
As a wicked burglar.

A safer game he might have scored,
With some rich "brother in the Lord";
A "hundred thousand" might have passed
Into his hands, and he been classed
As a Close Plymouthian!

—Society.

A great many people have "God" on the brain. They want this word tacked up, like a horse shoe, over every door in the land to scare away some devil that is on the lookout for his human prey. We know of no class of people more God-crazy than the Scotch Presbyterians—these Christians who are working to put God into our national constitution. Now, it may be that we should have a better government if there was an acknowledgment in the constitution that God is the source of the authority of the nation, when we know that the people are, but we do not see it. These Presbyterians call our great national charter a "secular instrument," and say it is "immoral" because God's name is omitted from it. We take exception to this slander, and submit that the constitution would be immoral if it acknowledged God as the source of the nation's authority, because it would then contain a lie. This government is founded upon the people, and to make any other declaration is to declare a falsehood. It is the glory of our nation that it is secular. Should the time ever come when the national constitution should have God in it, its glory would be gone.—*Boston Investigator*.

A German student, wrestling with the English language, rendered a well-known text as follows—"The ghost is willing but the meat is feeble."

An exchange wants to know "why it is, with so many negroes dying, nobody sees a black ghost." It is for the same reason that, with so many white people dying, nobody ever sees a white ghost.

A Sunday-school teacher was talking to the boys of her class about "eternal rest." "Now boys," she said, "tell me what it is your father's most desire when they return home from their labors all tired out. Tell me what they want more than anything else." "Beer," exclaimed their little voices in unison.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Battersea—Chatham Hall (adjoining Battersea Park Station, I.C.D.R.): 8, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "Food and Feeding," with diagrams (3d., 6d., and 1s.)

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, C. Cohen will lecture. Monday at 9, C. Cohen's science class.

Camberwell—81 New Churen-road, S.E.: 7.30, J. M. Robertson, "Life Without Religion." Friday at 8, J. Rowney, "The Bible Opposed to science and Morality" (free). Free science classes (hygieny and astronomy) every Friday evening at 7.30.

Finsbury Branch, Minor Hall of Science: March 4, at 8, concert. Sunday at 12, members' monthly meeting.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, W. A. Stewart, "The Property Owners: a Plea for Liberty" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, A. B. Moss, "My Path from Superstition to Free-thought" (3d., 6d., and 1s.) Wednesday at 8.15, a lecture (free).

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday at 8, A. B. Moss, "Why Christianity has Failed" (free).

Lambeth—Mr. Roger's, 114 Kennington-road: 7.30, important business meeting.

Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street: Monday at 8.30, business meeting.

Progressive Association, Penton Hall, 81 Pentonville-road: 7, C. D. Collet, "Uganda: the Process of Civilisation, 1885-92; the Missionary Supplemented by the Military" (free); preceded by vocal and instrumental music.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, C. Cohen, "Religion and Free-thought."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Revolt Against Christianity."

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Hall No. 5, upstairs): 6.30, monthly concert.

Ardwick—Co-operative Hall, Downing-street: March 7, 8, 9, and 10, debate between George Wise and Stanley Jones; March 7 and 8, on "Theism or Atheism, which is the more Reasonable?"; March 9 and 10, on "Has Man a Soul?"; each evening at 7.45.

Belfast—Crown Chambers Hall, 64 Royal-avenue: 7, Hugh Gordon, "Evolution."

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: Charles Watts, 11, "A Social and Theological Outlook"; 7, "Why I Left the Christian Party."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, A. J. Boyle, "Experiences in Brazil" (free); collection in aid of the Cinderella Club.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, business meeting and lecture by J. Rogers, "Master and Workman."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, J. B. Coppock, "The Conversion of the English"; 2.45, Sunday-school for children; 7, J. B. Coppock, "Animal and Plant Life: a Chapter in Evolution" (lantern illustrations).

Derby—Mission Hall, top of Sacheverel-street, Normanton-road: Monday at 7.30, W. H. Whitney, "Voltaire."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, J. Cowie, "Christianity and Toleration"; 6.30, R. Laurie, "Prominent Men of the Eighteenth Century."

Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7, business meeting; 7.30, a lecture.

Leeds—Waverley Hall, York Buildings, New York-street, Kirk-gate: 7, Mr. Dyche (Fabian), "Modern Socialism."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Mr. Doeg, "Israel in Egypt."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: John Grange, 3, "The Labor Church: its Basis and Objects Considered"; 6.30, "Unbelief, the Mainspring of Progress."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, G. Selkirk, "Equality and Fraternity."

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

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, South-sea: 3, mutual improvement class; 7, Mr. Mercer, "The Principles of Secularism."

Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7, W. P. Soper, a Reading from Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*.

Sheffield—Hall of science, Roockingham-street: Stanley Jones, 11, "God and Soul"; 3, "Noah and Lot—Flood and Fire"; 7, "An Impeachment of Christianity"; tea at 5.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting; 7.30, Mr. Mills, "The Gods and their Origin."

Wolverhampton—Athenaeum Assembly Room, Queen-street: 3, general meeting; 7, G. Bayliffe, "Science and Theosophy" (free). Monday at 7.45, in Exchange Hall, debate between R. F. Dell and Charles Watts on "Has the Church been a Greater Factor to Human Progress than Secularism?" (1s., 6d., and 3d.)

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H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—March 12, Battersea; 19, Camberwell; 20, Blackheath Liberal Club; 26, Libra Hall. April 2, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Uredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—March 5, Hall of Science; 12, Walworth Radical Club; 19, Hyde Park. April 2, New Brompton; 16, Hyde Park; 23, Hammersmith.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—March 5, m., Battersea; e., Libra Hall; 12, Manchester; 19, Edmonton; 26, Camberwell.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—March 12, m., Battersea; 19, Bethnal Green; 26, m., Hyde Park.

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