

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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CONVERTED INFIDELS.

CHRISTIAN logic is a curious thing. There is nothing like it, we should imagine, in the heavens above or the waters under the earth. Certainly there is nothing like it on the earth itself, unless we make an exception in the case of Christian veracity, which is as much like Christian logic as one cherry is like another.

It is a long time since Christians began arguing—it would be an outrage on the dictionary to call it reasoning. They have been at it for nearly two thousand years. Their founder, Jesus Christ, seldom argued. He uttered himself dogmatically at most times; occasionally he spoke in parables; and whenever he was cornered he escaped on a palpable evasion. His great disciple, Paul, however, was particularly fond of arguing. His writings abound in "for" and "whereas." The argument he most affected was the circular one. He could run round a horseshoe, skip over from point to point, and run round again as nimbly as any man on record. In a famous chapter in Corinthians, for instance, he first proves the resurrection of the dead by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and then proves the resurrection of Jesus Christ by the resurrection of the dead. It is in the same chapter that he enunciates the botanical truth (a truth of Bible botany, observe) that a seed does not bear anything unless it dies. Altogether the great Apostle is a first-rate type of the Christian logician, and there are some who declare him to be a first-rate type of the Christian truth-teller.

Speeding down the stream of time to the present age, we see that Christian logic (yes, and Christian veracity) has undergone little if any alteration. It is as infantile and as impudent as ever. Arguments that would look fallacious in the nursery are used in the pulpit, generation after generation, with an air of solemn profundity, as though they were as wise as the oracles of omniscience. To select from such a plethora is almost impossible; the difficulty is where to begin. But happily we are under no necessity of selection. A case is before us, and we take it as it comes. It is a "converted infidel" case, in the report of a recent sermon—the last of a series on "Is Christianity Played Out?"—by the Rev. Dr. Hiles Hitchens; the gentleman referred to in one of our last week's paragraphs as wishing for an old three-legged stool or something made by Jesus Christ. Dr. Hitchens, alas! cannot find the stool, and has to put up with the creed instead; though, perhaps, he gets as much out of the creed as he would make by selling the stool to the British Museum.

Dr. Hitchens preached from the text, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord"—a statement which, after the lapse of so many centuries, has still to be couched in the future tense. The delay has been excessive, but Dr. Hitchens is hopeful. He believes in the ultimate and speedy fulfilment of the prophecy. One of his grounds for so believing is

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this (we quote from the *Christian Commonwealth*), that "Out of 20 leading lecturers, authors, editors, and debaters on the side of Infidelity 17 have been brought to Christ within the last 30 years, have left their infidel associations, openly professed the religion of Jesus, and engaged in Christian work." The last he named, we are told, was "the case of a National Secular lecturer, of whom the sceptics were greatly proud, who has recently been received by, and now lectures for, the Christian Evidence Society."

We leave the consideration of these "facts" for a moment, and deal in the first place with Dr. Hitchens's peculiar logic. It is truly Christian. The species is unmistakable. Seventeen Freethinkers have been converted to Christianity! Wonderful! But how many Christians have been converted to Freethought? Ay, there's the rub. For every specimen Dr. Hitchens produces we will produce a thousand. Not only were the rank and file of the Freethought party very largely brought up as Christians, but its leaders are of the same category. Charles Bradlaugh was brought up as a Christian, so was Colonel Ingersoll. Can Dr. Hitchens produce two names among his "converts" of the same weight, or a half, a quarter, or a tithe of it? Every leader of Freethought in England, we believe, is a convert from Christianity. As for the "leading" men Dr. Hitchens refers to, we presume they are the persons initialed in the late Mr. Whitmore's tract, and those among them who were leaders were not converted, and those who were converted were not leaders. The real leaders of the Freethought party, those who were long in its service, and were entrusted with power and responsibility, were never converted. And the cases on Mr. Whitmore's list are old. They have an ancient and fish-like smell. Dr. Hitchens will perhaps be good enough to tell us the name of any man of real distinction in the Freethought party who has been "converted" during the last twenty years. We defy him to do so. If he goes back far enough he will find a few men who were not trusted in our party, and a few weaklings who could not fight an uphill battle, who went over to the enemy. Real leaders of our party fought, suffered, and starved, but they never deserted the flag. Christianity could not convert a Bradlaugh or a Holyoake; it could only bribe or allure a Sexton or a Gordon, or others of the "illustrious obscure" in Mr. Whitmore's fraudulent catalogue. In short, the "conversions" to Christianity so trumpeted are mostly dubious, generally insignificant, and all ancient. If the prophecy which Dr. Hitchens preached from is to be accomplished, it will have to quicken its rate of fulfilment during the past twenty years. We convert tremendously more Christians than you do Freethinkers; the balance is terribly to your disadvantage; you can only make out a promising account by setting down your infinitesimal gains and making no entry of your tremendous losses.

The only recent case that Dr. Hitchens refers to is that of "a National Secular lecturer, of whom the sceptics were greatly proud." Dr. Hitchens evi-

dently takes this gentleman at his own estimate. That *he* thinks the sceptics were greatly proud of him is intelligible; it is quite in keeping with his shallow, vulgar, and egotistical nature. But the truth is "the sceptics," in any general sense, were *not* proud of him. He was a very young man, with a great deal to learn, who had a very brief career as a Secularist in East London. In a thoughtless moment a local Secular Society gave him office, and that fact is his entire stock-in-trade as a "converted Freethinker." He was never one of the National Secular Society's appointed lecturers; he was neither "author, editor, or debater"; and he was utterly unknown to the party in general. Dr. Hitchens has, in fact, discovered a mare's nest. We are in a position to speak with some authority, and we defy him to name any Freethinker "of whom the sceptics were greatly proud" who has of late years been converted to Christianity. It is easy enough to impose on an ignorant congregation, and Dr. Hitchens is probably aware of the lengths to which a reckless pulpiteer may carry his mendacity. But candid investigators will conclude that "converted infidels" cannot be very plentiful, when the majority of them are so ancient; nor very important, when an obscure youth has to be advertised as "a leader" of whom the sceptics (nine out of ten of them never having heard of him) were "greatly proud."

We should imagine that Dr. Hitchens is rather new to this line of advocacy. In the course of time he will learn—if indeed he has not already learnt, and is concealing the fact—that the "converted infidels" will not stand a minute's scrutiny. The only safe method is to drop questionable cases and resort to sheer invention. Even that method, however, is not devoid of peril, as one of its practitioners has recently discovered. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes must by this time be extremely sorry he circulated that false and foolish story of the converted Atheist shoemaker. The exposure of it follows him wherever he goes, and illustrates the truth of at least one Bible text—"Be sure your sin will find you out."

G. W. FOOTE.

WHO WROTE THE GOSPELS?

THE question as to the authorship of the letters signed "Junius," though it has absorbed the minds of some very eminent men, is one mainly of literary interest. Little depends on it. Whoever the author, the same value attaches to the writings. In the case of the Christian gospels, however, with their marvellous reports of the miraculous birth, life, and resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ, everything depends on the question of who were the reporters. Were they personal eye-witnesses with no motive for deception and incapable of being deceived, or have we but legends handed down traditionally, and compiled in their present form ages after the time of the events related? That the latter is the true state of the case can, I think, be made clear to anyone who will undertake to investigate the matter, and if this be so it at once settles the pretensions of Christianity to be a divine revelation.

If the gospels were authentic, proved to be written by the persons whose names they bear, it would not follow they were trustworthy. The stories of a man being born of a virgin, taken by the Devil to the pinnacle of a temple, walking on water, turning water into wine, and sending devils into pigs, may be but romances although the books were traced to the middle of the first century. But if these documents cannot be traced within a century or more of the period to which they refer; if they were not written by eye-witnesses, as two of them are pretended to be; if they were not the production of the parties whose names they bear; what more reason is

there for believing such stories than for crediting the miracles related in the gospel of James, the gospel of Thomas, or the gospel of Nicodemus? If the gospels are not authentic, Christianity, so far as its supernatural features are concerned, is out of court. If their stories are not veritable histories, but myths foisted upon credulous people in a superstitious age, Christianity is without basis and nothing better than a superstition.

What is absolutely known of the gospels? All that is certain is that they come to us through the Church, their manuscripts being found in various convents, monasteries, and church libraries. Not only the New Testament, but the whole of ecclesiastical literature has come down to us through ecclesiastical sources. Of this literature a large portion is now known to have been forged by monks and priests intent on building and buttressing the dominion of their Church. No literature bears such a heavy weight of just suspicion as the alleged early literature of Christianity, and none needs a more careful scrutiny. History, outside of the Church, knows little or nothing of the gospels before the invention of printing. True, there are manuscripts which have got to various libraries from the monkish collections, but the very earliest of them—the Vatican, the Sinaitic, and the Alexandrine MSS.—are not assigned, even by orthodox scholars, to an earlier date than the fourth century. The dates and genuineness of all of them is merely a matter of the opinion of experts: and a scholar like Mr. Edwin Johnson, M.A., a gentleman trained for the ministry, can argue, in his *Rise of Christendom*, that Christianity, in its entirety, is later than the rise of Islam, and that none of the Christian literature was written before the twelfth century!

I am not in a position to defend Mr. Johnson's bold thesis, but I do say that every scrap of evidence adduced to prove the pretensions of the Christian Church must be examined with the utmost caution, considering the claims to universal dominion of that Church and the magnitude of the interests at stake. Taking the evidence for the gospels adduced by Christian advocates at their own valuation, what does it amount to? Admitting, for the nonce, that the writers adduced in testimony to the existence of the gospels were genuine individuals, living at the dates assigned to them—a position which, in regard to several at least, I should strenuously contest—what certitude do they give us as to the authorship of the gospels?

The earliest writer said to have mentioned either of the gospels by name is Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (150-167). His testimony rests entirely on the authority of Irenæus and Eusebius. What he said is, that "Mark being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with great accuracy, but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord. But afterwards he accompanied Peter, who delivered his teachings as necessity served, but did not make a regular record of the Lord's discourses; wherefore Mark has not erred in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one point he was careful, to omit nothing he heard nor to narrate anything falsely."

Dr. S. Davidson, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, and other good critics, think this statement cannot apply to our present second gospel. Even orthodox Canon Sanday admits (*Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 151): "The second gospel is written in order, it is not an original document. These two characteristics make it improbable that it is in its present shape the document to which Papias alludes." Dr. Davidson (*Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i., p. 539) declares: "A careful examination of Papias's testimony shows that it does not relate to our present gospel, nor bring Mark into connection with it as its

author. All we learn from it is that Mark wrote notes of a gospel which was not our canonical one." The description of Bishop Papias would lead us to suspect, not a regularly concocted gospel, but fragmentary reminiscences of Peter's preaching. Perhaps he alluded to *The Preaching of Peter*, a work cited by Heracleon and Clement of Alexandria as scripture; or it may have been the recently discovered *Gospel of Peter* to which he refers. Papias also says—apud Eusebius—"Matthew composed the *logia* [oracles or sayings] in the Hebrew dialect, and everyone interpreted them as he was able." It would be an utter misnomer to call an historical narrative beginning with a detailed story of the genealogy and birth of Jesus, and ending with an account of his betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, *logia*, or discourses. Moreover, ours is a Greek, not a Hebrew gospel. Even its quotations from the Old Testament are not from the Hebrew but the Greek. Further, one of the fragments of Papias relates that Judas was crushed by a chariot so that his bowels gushed out. How could he have said this if he had, and credited Matthew's story that Judas hanged himself? But Papias deliberately says he preferred tradition to what was recorded in books. What books? Canon Wescott disingenuously suggests they were apocryphal books. But the whole point of Papias' saying lay in tradition being preferable to the best books at his command.

Irenæus (177—192) is the first to mention the four gospels by name. But is this proof he had the same documents before him? We must take leave to doubt this when we find he seriously contends that Jesus lived to be fifty years of age (*Against Heresies*, bk. ii., chap. xxii.) Irenæus unites his testimony to that of all the Fathers that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew. But our Gospel is in Greek, and there is good reason to believe it is not a translation. If it is a translation, who made it? Not one of the early Fathers mentions a translator, or suggests that Matthew wrote other than a Gospel for the Hebrews, written in their own tongue. But the whole question of the language of the New Testament is of the utmost importance, and deserves separate consideration.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE APOSTLES IN COURT.

IN a recent article in these columns we dealt with Mr. Robert Roberts' peculiar theory as to the "Second Coming of Christ in the Earth." His lectures upon this subject have been published, and are now being widely circulated throughout the country. Mr. Roberts, we believe, is regarded as the leader of the Christadelphian party in England, and as many of the claims he sets forth involve questions of a general theological nature, a brief examination of the groundwork of his thesis may tend to show, not only the fallacy of his own extraordinary fancies, but also the very unsatisfactory nature of the basis upon which other New Testament theories are founded. Did we not know the marvellous influence that theological follies have in perverting the human judgment, we should be astonished even more than we are, at the utter absurdity of many features of Christian belief, and also at the childish credulity manifested in accepting them as true.

Mr. Roberts, in his first lecture, refers to the writers of the New Testament as being "eye-witnesses" of certain events there recorded. "They do not," he observes, "narrate matters at second hand," but with "the highest discernment" apart from inspiration, they deal with "matters on which our English courts every day allow very ordinary people to be competent to give reliable evidence on, and that on the evidence of one's own senses." It is

a significant fact that Mr. Roberts entirely fails to prove the first thing necessary to his case, and that is who wrote the four gospels. In the next place, he gives no evidence that the authors named in the New Testament were "eye-witnesses" of the events they mention. Instead of this, he, assuming the genuineness and authenticity of the book, brings the apostles into "court"; and from their evidence he endeavors to prove the truth of the scriptural account of the birth, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Christ. We are told that the New Testament being in our hands "is a mountain fact," but we are not reminded that this same book has been so altered and interpolated since its first appearance that it is impossible to judge accurately as to what it originally testified. Furthermore, it is overlooked that as we have the book to-day its teachings are too mystical and contradictory to permit it being of any absolute authority upon the very questions that it is quoted to prove.

Let us introduce Mr. Roberts' "eye-witnesses" into "court" and examine their testimony. Is it possible to conceive an English jury accepting as true the statements that a man was born without a human father, that this man died and then rose from the grave, and, after partaking of a meal, ascended bodily up to heaven, where we are told "flesh and blood" could not enter? But if the jury did believe such stories, that would not make them true. We may remind Mr. Roberts that it does not follow that the witnesses must have been intentional "liars and impostors" if the statements they made were not correct. There is no lack of evidence that persons have often been themselves deceived as to the character of incidents about which they have written or spoken. It is a common experience in "English courts" to have verdicts reversed, and in some cases it has been proved that the witnesses, jury, and judge have all been mistaken. Even innocent men have been hanged for murder through mistaken identity. Thus if it could be shown (which it cannot) that Mr. Roberts' "witnesses" believed they saw the events referred to, it would not therefore prove that the events took place as described.

But if it is true that some of the writers of the New Testament were such as Mr. Roberts contends, that would not apply to Mark, Luke and St. Paul, for not one of these even claims to have been an "eye-witness." Besides, does any writer in the New Testament say that he saw the birth from a virgin, the Magi, the star, the slaughter of children by Herod, or the resurrection? We have not the personal testimony of one individual who asserts that he saw these events. Then if we take the ascension, what is the fact? Matthew and John do not mention it, and, the Rev. Dr. Giles says, "according to Mark (xvi. 19) the ascension took place from the room in which the eleven sat at meat in Jerusalem on the evening of the resurrection, but that in Luke's gospel (xxiv. 50—51) it took place from Bethany, whither Jesus led them out immediately after his appearance to them on the evening of the resurrection." Neither of these accounts, however, is correct if the writer of the Acts be accurate, for he says the ascension did not take place until forty days after the resurrection. Surely this is not "a mountain fact" corroborated by "eye-witnesses." Furthermore, there is considerable disagreement among the writers as to what others are said to have seen. No court of justice in England would rely upon such contradictory evidence as that given in the New Testament. The most important sermon ever delivered from a Christian standpoint is said by one New Testament writer to have been given on a mountain (Matt. vi.), while another says it was uttered in "a plain" (Luke vi. 17). These "eye-witnesses" seem incapable also of even reporting correctly the simple inscription which we are told was placed on the cross, for it is rendered differently

in each of the four gospels. The only legitimate inference to be drawn is that those who wrote about it did not see the inscription, or else that "the evidences of their senses" were as inconclusive upon that point as they were when they spoke of Jesus going "up into a mountain" at the same time that he was coming "down from the mountain." Take the instance when it is said that Jesus met a blind man. One writer states that it was as Jesus "went out of Jericho" (Mark x.), but another alleges that it occurred when "he was come nigh unto Jericho" (Luke xviii.)

The case of Judas furnishes another instance that "the evidences of the senses" of the writers who report certain incidents of his career were anything but reliable. Here we have such conflicting accounts that they would disqualify witnesses in any "court" from being trustworthy reporters of what actually took place. Matthew says Judas hanged himself, while the writer of Acts reports that he met with an accident, tumbled down, and was killed. Mark, Luke and John are silent upon this twofold death. In the Acts it is said that Judas himself "purchased a field with the reward of his iniquity," but Matthew says that he took the thirty pieces of silver to the priests and elders and that *they* bought the field.

The account of the Crucifixion is attended with the same unreliability as to particulars. John asserts that Jesus bore his own cross to the place of execution, while Matthew, Mark and Luke inform us that another man carried it for him. According to John, Jesus was taking his trial at twelve o'clock at noon, while Mark says he was crucified at nine o'clock on the same morning, three hours before he was tried. Matthew mentions that before the crucifixion the soldiers gave Christ vinegar mixed with gall. Mark, however, says it was wine and myrrh that were given him, but John, differing from both, remarks that it was vinegar and hyssop. Mark reports that the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus "reviled him." Luke states that it was only one that did so, and that the other rebuked him for so doing, and that Jesus promised him a place in paradise that very day. Now if "very ordinary people" gave evidence like this in our courts of justice it would be a very extraordinary jury who would believe them.

But, Mr. Roberts says, the proof that these men were inspired is that they "were not men of genius," but, "as admitted by all, they were fishermen," and that it is impossible to account for them giving such an account as they did without being, as Christ said, enabled to do so by "the spirit of my Father that speaketh in you." We grant that the writers, whoever they were, did not display a great amount of genius, but possibly that was in consequence of the peculiar "spirit" that spoke within them. Is it, however, true that "all admit" the writers were, as Mr. Roberts says, "ignorant fishermen"? We will not appeal to such men as Paine or Voltaire, as Mr. Roberts, with true Christian politeness and regard to accuracy, speaks of their vulgarity and malignity, but we will refer to a Bible, issued in 1876 under the approval of the Cardinal of Westminster, as to whether the writers of the New Testament were fishermen and "wrote at the time" when the events are supposed to have taken place. Matthew is described as a collector of taxes, and Luke as a physician and painter, who wrote a quarter of a century after Jesus; and the Acts is dated A.D. 63. Paul and John are set down at the same date. These statements, given on Christian authority, show that the events treated of in the New Testament were not recorded at the time they are said to have happened, and that the writers were not "ignorant fishermen."

Mr. Roberts's assertion about the Bibles being numerous and in the hands of many "at the start" does not accord with the history of the "Canon of the New Testament," as given by the Rev. Dr. S. David-

son. The fact is, there appears to be no evidence that the early Christians were a literary people; they depended upon oral teaching, as attested by Luke and Papias. The latter had an opportunity of knowing, but he has not recorded that even in the middle of the second century he knew of the gospels of Luke and John. True he mentions sayings and oracles which doubtless he would not have done if our present gospels had been known "at the start." Writings or scriptures were put in circulation subsequently, and for a special purpose on the part of those who did it.

CHARLES WATTS.

WHAT INSPIRES HIM?

ONE of the saddest facts in human history is the persecution slaves and their owners have always inflicted upon reformers, whenever the opportunity has occurred. A man with real insight into circumstances of his age, and possessed of public spirit enough to prompt him to act, knows also the tremendous risk he runs in opening his mouth against popular and sacred abuses. He is quite aware that he will rouse the indignation of priest and king, and that the mob of their slaves will hate him much more bitterly even than the rulers.

History is full of examples; especially church history. Jesus, they say, thundered against the Scribes and Pharisees of his day. The inevitable followed—they frowned and the mob hooted him even on the cross! and "God" forsook him. Ay! all the gods that ever existed have always forsaken the wretched.

God, like the rich, his ready visit pays
Where fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes,
And lights on lids unsullied with a tear.

Sleep and God are both alike in this respect. It is true, we know the inspiring motive of Jesus, if the Testament may be received in evidence, he endured the cross for the sake of a reward, "for the joy that was set before him." And all Christian martyrs suffered and died from precisely similar motives. But leaving those mercenary martyrs, who swapped this world for an infinitely better and more enduring one, we may well ask what motive prompts the Freethinker or the Atheist to endure scoffs and sneers, persecution, imprisonment, practical outlawry? Take Giordano Bruno, burnt at Rome as an Atheist almost 300 years ago. He had no hope of reward, had no God either to help or to forsake him in his giant agony. What but the noble sentiment of true liberty and the full persuasion that his deeds and his sufferings would benefit the race to which he belonged, could have carried that man to the stake? And yet the majority of mankind then existing would have voted for his death! This is a strange passion that inspires the true reformer. He suffers for and at the hands of his only enemies, and to do good to those enemies and their children!

Take Voltaire, an exile for many years, almost a lifetime, from the France he so passionately loved, because he would wage war upon cant and tyranny. Look at Paine, writing his *Rights of Man* in face of imprisonment and mob execrations, penning his *Age of Reason* under the very shadow of the guillotine! It is saddening to reflect that the poor brutal slaves of priest and king have frantically cursed the memories of those two magnificent reformers for over 100 years! And why? For the one reason that they devoted all their energies to the emancipation and improvement of the very brutes that still load their names with curses!

Had Voltaire and Paine joined the tyrants, their talents and indomitable energy must have gained them the highest rewards priest and king had to bestow. But the love of liberty was too strong in them to cringe and fawn to tyrants; and so they put

their thoughts on paper, scattered them to the world; and their ungrateful brutish countrymen are reaping the untold benefits of their labor, while abusing them with fanatic bitterness for the grand and glorious work they did.

The liberty of the press was won mostly by avowed Freethinkers. Carlile stands head and shoulders above all other men that ever struggled for the emancipation of the press. Again and again he went to prison for long terms, solely to destroy the tyranny that held the poor man's press in bondage. And what could he hope for? What inspired him? Not religion. That persecuted him in the bitterest fashion possible. All "respectability" was shocked and scandalised at his doings. The only hope that could have inspired Carlile was that of doing good to the poor. Hetherington and other Freethinkers followed in the same track, inspired by the same grand motive; and the people of to-day are reaping the immense advantage of a free press, which they never would have had but for Freethinkers—the very persons they still persecute, because Freethinkers have too much independence to wear the collars or the shackles of the Churches.

One of the most mysterious features in human life is this I am now noting. A man with no religious belief, who fears no hell, hopes for no heaven, who expects to die and be no more, stands up for human liberty, demands equal duty and equal liberty for all; suffers ostracism, almost outlawry, abuse, threats of assassination; is held up to the people as a monster, as everything that is evil—by the very parties for whom he is doing his uttermost to win some scraps of justice. Respectability laughs and frowns alternately, jeers and rages; yet on he goes. And why? No reward before his eyes. He has no god. No gold. He expects hard work and poverty as long as he lives, and then to be execrated, or else forgotten, through all the ages to come. What inspires him? What is his motive?

This is a problem worthy of the greatest philosopher. It is the strangest fact in human history. Think of it.

JOS. SYMES.

PARADISE DAY BY DAY.

(Communicated through our own medium, Mr. U. N. Steady.)

PARADISE (which is usually very solemn) is rather gay just now, owing to the absence of its Governor. He is kept very busy getting up floods in Queensland, famines in Russia and India, cyclones, train wreckages and fires in America, accidents, shipwrecks and other disasters in all parts. Rumor has it he is glad to escape the monotonous Holy, holy, holy, of the beasts and elders round the great white throne and the continual complaints of angels whose halos do not fit. Anyway he is absent for a while, and paradise has been holding carnival.

One of the great attractions was a flying race between Cardinal Manning and Cardinal Lavigerie. The contest was for heavy stakes, viz., who should inspire the election of the next Pope. Nearly all the Catholic inhabitants assembled to witness the match. Betting was heavy on the Frenchman, who looked superb in his crimson stockings, and worked his wings in agile and archangelic style. The lean and hungry Manning, however, outflew him, and it is in consequence reported that Cardinal Gibbons, of Baltimore, will have a good chance of wearing the Papal tiara when Pecci ascends on high.

Another sport that attracted large crowds was a boxing match between the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon and the Rev. Morley Punshon. This, however, proved a fiasco; for when the great Baptist found his opponent had been rightly named, he threw up the sponge and hopped away behind a dark cloud, for all the world as if still afflicted with the gout.

A strange petition has been sent up to the Throne. It was signed "John Calvin," and prayed that he might be permitted to visit hell for a short time to witness the present condition of a damned Spaniard named Miguel Servedo, and to ascertain if the petitioner was correct in

saying there were infants in hell not a span long. Many of the inhabitants have expressed fervent hopes that the petition will be granted and that the petitioner will not return.

Some sensation was caused by the announcement of the Son and Heir, that when John Roberts, jun., comes here he will give him 900,000 up on a spot-barred billiard match for a million. Probably he will have the good sense not to enter on a miracle-working contest with his blessed Savior.

A new choir-master is to be placed over the cherubim and seraphim who continually do cry. David, who has long been champion harpist, says he has stood it long enough. He says he wants peace and quietness to compose a few more psalms; but it is well known he is always wanting to sneak off that he may overlook the female angels when at their ablutions. His son, Solomon, is continually rowing with his seven hundred wives, and wishing he was down below with the other three hundred. Indeed, I suspect that most of the angels would rather be "down below," for there would be little but moping and moulting here were it not for these occasional absences of the Governor.

A CHRISTIAN.

Who says—and mind you, not in fun—
That Jesus Christ and God are one,
And yet, that one's the other's Son?
A Christian.

Who turns, when smitten on the cheek,
The other side, as if to seek
To have it balanced, so to speak?
A Christian.

Who takes no thought, but for to-day,
And thus his debts can never pay,
Nor help a brother on his way?
A Christian.

Who takes no physic when he's ill,
Nor seeks a carnal Doctor's skill;
But trusts to God to cure or kill?
A Christian.

Who brands, as sins, all care and thrift;
Who drives prudential thoughts adrift,
And trusts with providence to shift?
A Christian.

Who helps no hospitals, nor spends
A cent on scientific ends;
But says that all on pray'r depends?
A Christian.

Who 'gainst all orphanages girds;
And says that God—see Christ's own words—
Will feed the orphans like the birds?
A Christian.

Who hates all scientists and schools,
And calls the masters Satan's tools;
The foolish, wise; and sages, fools?
A Christian.

Who casts out devils at his will;
Who safely drinks what ought to kill;
And shows a monstrous lingual skill?
A Christian.

Who always gives, for evil, naught
But goodness—as his Savior taught—
And gives for goodness—God knows what?
A Christian.

Who is it whom—where'er we be,
On sea or land, you'll say with me—
We hear about, but never see?
A Christian.

In latitude—say ninety-one,*
But nowhere else around the sun,
One might descry—ere Earth be done—
A Christian.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

* As there is, of course, no latitude 91°, this is a sort of spacial paraphrase of the Greek Calends.

A DOCTOR'S VIEWS ON THEOLOGY.

I entered the profession before most of you were born, and if, as some allege, both within and without the profession I have fought unequally and to my disadvantage with wild beasts at Ephesus, I am thus the more competent to direct your course, and to warn you of shoals and quicksands ahead. Among the last matters to engage our attention in the course which now terminates were the physiology and structure of the eye and the ear. Viewing the beauty and adaptation in these organs, you could not have failed to realise the powerful and relevant support thus offered to the teleological arguments for the existence of a Deity. At the same time, to our limited intellectual capacity, there is a "rift within the lute"—there is nothing in nature without its obverse side. Has the world not been for all time, as far as we can gather, a vast charnel-house? Is there not a fierce and uncompromising struggle for existence along the whole line from the monad to megatherium? How can we reconcile the howling savagery of animal nature, the fierce natural instrument of offence, and the cunningly devised means of defence, and carnage everywhere rampant, with the beneficence of an all-wise and compassionate Creator, without whose knowledge even an insignificant sparrow falls not to the ground! Our bodies, as you know, are an aggregation of cells, and these cells are in a state of continual internecine warfare with one another. The very cells through which our blood is supplied with nourishment are—*horrible dictu!*—"beasts of prey!" Now, if this be the state in the physical world, we need not seek in vain for a parallel in the social world. In the former, it is a case of pure strength and unhallowed instinctive cunning to obtain superiority; in the latter it is wealth, social position, and dissimulation which are employed to crush the weak and to oppress the poor. That the world is morally better than it was two thousand years ago I very much dispute—that there is an infinitely greater affectation of meretricious goodness I willingly concede.

—Dr. Campbell Black, Concluding Lecture at the Andersonian College.

AN UNLUCKY MAN.

Not long since, in a village in the north of Scotland, the parish minister meeting a farm servant who is a member of his flock, the following conversation ensued:

Parish minister: "Well, John, and how are things doing with you? I hope you are keeping well."

Farm servant: "Hech, sir, it's hard work I hae to dae; nae rest from morn tae nicht; work an' work, an' no' a minute's peace for me."

Parish minister: "Well, John, we must all do our share in the work of this world. Remember it's only the preparation for a better world, where there will be no more work to be done."

Farm servant: "Weel, sir, that may be for the likes o' you, but I'm no' so sure that there will be naething for me to dae in the other world. It will be the same thing there, and I'll be told, 'John, clean the sun,' 'John, hang out the moon,' 'John, light the stars,' an' so on. I've no doubt they'll find always something for me to do, unlucky man that I am."

Curate (discovering Hodgkins busy in his garden on Sunday morning): "My dear Mr. Hodgkins, you seem to have forgotten that this is the day on which you should do no manner of work." Hodgkins: "Ay, it's aw reet, Maister Mildman, aw'm on'y geth'rin' a few heads for the pot, and one likes to hev 'em fresh, tha' knows; but if aw were thee aw'd hurry up, mon, or tha'll be late for th' work. Aw know what a hot 'un the vicar is. He be as like to sack thee as not if tha's late on th' job."

A little boy of three was kneeling at his mother's side saying his evening prayers. In the midst of them he stopped and said, "But, mother, I don't love Jesus." The mother, dear, pious soul, young, and this the only lamb, was quite shocked and said, "But, Henry, you must love Jesus; you owe him all you have—father, mother, what you wear, all your pleasure, what you eat, everything!" There was a long pause, the little head was bowed, and then suddenly the baby looked up, complete satisfaction beaming upon his face, and said, "Yes, mother, but Dan brings the milk."

PRAYER ANSWERED.

You unbelievers don't believe in Providence. Perhaps you will try and explain the following facts on your wicked infidel principles. In the early summer of 1880 Queensland was parched with heat, wells dried up, and crops scorched before grown. The parsons prayed for rain, and the most prayerful men in the district put up supplications in their own homes with fervor and energy. Well, sir, *they've got it now*. You may say thirteen years is a good while to wait; but I must remind you that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years. He doeth all things well, in his own good time. You may perhaps say they've got far more than they want; and doubtless those who are flooded out of house and home, and find their crops destroyed, may think the matter overdone; but then you must recollect how fervently they prayed for water in 1880.

A BELIEVER.

ACID DROPS.

James William Hobbs, of Liberator fame, who is now lodged and boarded at his country's expense, had a good reputation for piety. Five years ago, it is stated, he presided at a Scholar's Industrial Exhibition, and on that occasion he said it was impossible to forget that it was only a few years ago his wife and himself were Sunday-school children and afterwards Sunday-school teachers, engaged in the work of the extension of the teachings of "our common Lord and Master." He regretted to say he did not find as much honor, truth, and justice even among Christian men as there ought to be. Still he had great faith in Christianity!

One of the witnesses in the Liberator trial was Mr. J. T. Davis, who acted as auditor to the Company from 1884 to 1891. He had formerly been a Congregational minister, and "Reverend" was prefixed to his name on Balfour's prospectuses. It was an excellent bait for the fools who believe in the superior virtue of the sky-pilot profession. Mr. Davis took his salary and did the auditing in the fashion required of him. He did not read the deeds of the properties, and took Balfour's word for everything.

The *Bournemouth Guardian* reports the annual meeting of the local centre of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. One of the principal speakers was Miss Bolton. She said she was a clergyman's daughter, and could not be suspected of opposition to the Church, yet she declared that "the clergy were a stumbling block in the way of the Society." She had also proved by experience that it was not only the drunken and poor who ill-treated their children, but "people who went to church on Sundays were often those guilty of it." Mark the *often*, and remember that Miss Bolton's observation was greeted with "Hear, hear."

Talmage seems to be right. Those Atheists will commit suicide. Here is the Abbess of the Trinitaria Convent, Madrid, jumping out of a second-floor window, and killing herself on the spot. Yes, even in the best of all possible worlds, Atheists cannot keep from self-slaughter.

Monday's *Daily Chronicle* remarked that exactly a century had elapsed since the arrest of Richard Phillips, the printer of the *Leicester Herald*, for selling Paine's *Rights of Man*. A few days later he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. Of course the fact is worthy of being remembered, but why does the *Chronicle* go so far afield? Paine himself was tried for treason in London, and found guilty, though his flight to France saved him from hanging. Scores of men, too, and not merely Richard Phillips, suffered imprisonment for selling the *Rights of Man*. By and bye, perhaps, the *Chronicle* will also remind its readers that many more were sent to gaol for selling the *Age of Reason*.

Mr. Moncre D. Conway discoursed at South-place Chapel last Sunday morning on "Alcohol." He urged that closing public-houses was only damming a stream and compelling it to seek other channels. With respect to the Bible, he said it contained several texts warning against intemperance, but more in favor of drinking.

"Never since Christ ascended to heaven," said Hugh Price Hughes last Sunday, "had Christians been so alive to their social duties as they are to-day." That may be true, but how much credit does it yield to Christianity? Why should it

take eighteen hundred years to produce the modicum of social spirit over which Mr. Hughes cackles so consumedly?

Prophet Baxter fills his *Christian Herald* with trash. Here is his latest concoction: "THE BLASPHEMER ANSWERED.—A few days ago a man in the Midland district scoffingly spoke of his Maker, and with oaths he impiously asked the Almighty to take his sight. Next morning, on awaking, he remarked to his wife that 'it was a long time getting daylight.' She replied—'It is light, and a bright morning.' 'I cannot see,' said the mocker of God. No, his eyes had ceased to do the work for which God had created them." What a nice old Heavenly Father to be sure! It would be a pity to spoil such an original story by asking the name of the scoffer and the place in the Midland district where this truly divine manifestation occurred.

The same number of the *Christian Herald* has another story of an equally anonymous scoffer who, shortly after using some blasphemous expression, fell dead upon the side-walk. These yarns nicely measure the intellect of the readers of Baxter's journal, which boasts a larger circulation than that of any other religious paper.

In the *Gitisar*, a very ancient Sanskrit work, there is a prophecy to the effect that the time will come when there shall be no other religion than that of Love. There is nothing half as good in the old Jew book, which is always prophecying misfortune and looking forward to the Lord being revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God.

Julia McNartney, the wife of a Ratcliffe dock laborer, died recently at the age of 68, in circumstance which necessitated a coroner's inquest. She had been blind for sixteen years, and latterly had suffered from a bad cough. Finally she died of heart disease and bronchitis—that is, nominally, but really of starvation. Her husband, in giving evidence, was asked by the coroner, "Did you see the priest?" Replying yes, he was asked, "Has he done anything for you?" "No," said the witness, "he has enough to do to look after himself." Yes, and he appears to be doing it.

Three hundred years ago (on April 6, 1593) Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood were hanged at Tyburn by their fellow-Christians for the crime of teaching that God, the presumed creator of heaven and earth, could just as effectively be worshipped without bishops, churches, and parsons as with them. This was not their first taste of Christian mercy. Both had suffered long imprisonment; both had been taken to Tyburn before on March 31, and had the ropes round their necks when a week's reprieve was granted. They were resolute in their heresy, and were hung like common malefactors. On May 29 following, John Penry, or Ap Henry, a native of Brecknock, who had stirred up the principles of church independency in Wales, met the same fate.

John Penry was accused of being concerned in the writing of some pamphlets known as the Martin Marprelate tracts. These tracts were then what the *Freethinker* is now—an eyecore to the clergy. They asserted the liberty of the press, and attacked clerical pretensions with ridicule as well as argument. Martin's "pistles" against the "proud, Popish, presumptuous, profane, paltry, pestilent, and pernicious prelates" made some stir, especially as the authorities could not discover the author, and the suspicion seems to have been almost sufficient to ensure Penry's condemnation.

The Nonconformist and Independent congregations are very properly celebrating their martyrs by a mass meeting in Hyde Park this Saturday. They should remember, however, that others have carried on and gone further in the work of liberation. Barrowe, Greenwood, Penry, and the writers of the Martin Marprelate tracts were not mealy-mouthed in their opposition to the clergy; they knew that to overcome an abuse, you must strike hard and strike home. The real continuators of their work are those who have gone farther on the same road.

Family traditions have triumphed at Spurgeon's Tabernacle. Dr. Pierson is to go, and the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, one of the great preacher's sons, is to take his place. Very likely he will stay there permanently. Thus Amurath to Amurath

succeeds, though many people say that Thomas Spurgeon would never have "a look in" if it were not for his name and blood.

A Wesleyan writer in the *Manchester Examiner* is highly incensed that Wesleyans are following John Morley, who, he says, has an inherited mission to "crush the wretch." He says: "A man with no sense of moral obligation to an unseen moral Governor would be a strange man if at all sensitive to truth and honesty as known among Christian people. Our truth can't be John Morley's truth, nor can our Ten Commandments be John Morley's Decalogue." This raving bigot is unaware of any higher standard than his own barbarous fetish book, and fancies all morality is wanting in those who discard it. "Truth and honesty as known among Christian people," are, indeed, distinct from the same qualities as known among humanitarians.

More miracles! According to a *Christian World* advertisement—"A child of God (female), recently returned from abroad, will Preach and Lecture Free." It is something to find a Child of God nowadays, even a female one; and to find her working for nothing, and advertising the fact at her own expense, is really wonderful. The next advertisement to this Child of God's begins, "Dear Reader, will you Help Me?" Perhaps both advertisements mean the same thing at bottom.

The Southport Town Council wishes to outvie Birmingham in Sabbatarianism. They have ordered that the automatic machines in the Marine Parks must not be used on Sunday. They unhappily cannot prevent water flowing or the tide coming in on the Lord's Day, but they can at least stop all the public clocks, and this should be their next feat.

The young lad whose mother looked over his expenses-book and was gratified to find sundry items credited to S. P. G., which she took to be the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, but he interpreted "Something, Probably Grub," must have ceased his contribution. Mr. Henry Clark, the S.P.G. representative of the diocese of Liverpool, says "its receipts during the last four years present a gradual falling off." This is attributed to the autocratic rule under which "the authorities are lacking in administrative capacity." Further, says Mr. Clark, "the Standing Committee in London are practically self-elected." These gentry administer over £100,000 a year and doubtless have a good deal to show for it.

The sulky old Pope still refuses to recognise the King of Italy while he remains in Rome, and will not see any of the princes who visit Rome to congratulate the king on his silver wedding. Old Pecci, it is said, continually mumbles to himself the text, "Whosoever shall fall on this Peter shall be broken, and on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." The old pope doesn't know that he is the clay pot, and when he comes into collision with the brass pan, it is not the pan that will go down.

Christian Reunion is a lovely excuse for the jaunt of sky-pilots to Switzerland. But if anyone wants to see how much it is worth, let them read the religious papers of the past Holy Week. The Low Church organs are abusing the High Church Romanists, the High Church are ever sneering at the Low Church, and both unite in accusing the Nonconformists of seeking to rob the Church in Wales. The *Church Times* accused the *Christian World* of knowing "how to square the excision of one commandment from the Decalogue with the Nonconformist Congress." The *Christian World* writes of "The Angry Clergy." How they love one another!

Canon Driver, one of the leaders of the "New Criticism"—which is simply the Rationalist criticism of the continent newly imported into the Church of England—is censured by the *Christian Commonwealth* for leaning "perilously to the theories which eliminate the miraculous element, without which the Bible is worth no more than any ordinary document." We agree with Canon Driver and with our contemporary; with him as to the facts, and with it as to their significance. Mr. Matthew Arnold spoke for all cultivated society in saying that the Bible miracles are doomed. That being so, the "blessed book" is left to us like other volumes, worth just the use we can make of it. As something special, unique, its day is over; and we suspect that men like Canon Driver are well aware of the fact.

That good old fossil Archdeacon Denison writes to the *Church Times*: "I have yet to understand upon what warrant what is called 'thought' has any place in searching into the mysteries of God: into which it is impossible for it to comprehend." All we have to do is to become as little children, shut our eyes, open our mouths, and take what God—that is his ministers—send us. If only we open our gullets wide enough to swallow the Trinity, all the rest is easy. Well did Diderot write: "Wandering in an immense forest at night time, I have only a feeble lantern to light my path. A stranger comes who says to me, 'Blow out thy candle to better find thy way.' This stranger is the theologian."

The *Church Times* will have nothing to do with schism, which in the eyes of the sacerdotal class is the deadliest of sins, for does it not imply doubting their pretensions. Accordingly it falls foul of the Bishop of London for associating himself with a schismatic body by opening a Church for a French Protestant Congregation. The sacerdotal High Church sky-pilots, in whose interest the *C. T.* is written, pride themselves on being "Catholic priests," and hate the name of Protestant as much as the Devil is said to hate holy water.

There is one feature about the Church Patronage Bill for which future reformers may be thankful. By practically rendering Church patronage unsaleable, it will obviate any necessity for compensation to patrons when the time comes for disendowment. The Lord is always subtly working for his elect.

Canon Little, preaching recently at St. Paul's, made anything but a little observation. It was a big one, and impudent to boot. He declared that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was supported by higher evidence than the story of the coronation of Queen Victoria. Now the man who will say that is either very foolish or a thorough impostor. Queen Victoria's coronation has never been disputed, while the resurrection of J. C. has been disputed from the beginning to the end of the chapter. There is also abundant contemporary evidence of the one occurrence, and not a scrap of the other. But why continue? Even those who believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the evidence before them, must, if they are honest, admit that it is far from completely established; in fact, it is generally allowed, even by divines, that faith as well as reason is necessary to believe that Christ rose from the dead, and that it rests on all sorts of arguments as well as the testimony of personal witnesses.

We owe no apology for speaking thus frankly of Canon Little. He himself referred to the argument *à priori* and called it "the argument of a fool." His own statement about the Resurrection is the statement of a fool—or worse.

Squabbles in the Easter vestries have been carefully nursed by the rival Ritualist and anti-Ritualist parties in the Church. The cross on the altar or the laced nightgown of a priest acts on some people like the toreador's red scarf on a bull.

The Vienna correspondent of the *Daily News* reports that at the town of Gudrai, in the Caucasus, a Russian Orthodox church fell in during divine service in consequence of a terrible storm. More than a hundred persons are said to have been killed. Providence was, as usual, conspicuous by its absence.

The Rev. Hesketh Smith writes from Jerusalem, urging the speedy purchase of the Garden Tomb of Jesus from the Turkish Government, who think £4,000 a small enough figure, even were no religious sentiment concerned. We hope the bargain will be concluded. The more tombs of J. C. are shown the more evidently ridiculous will appear the whole Christian legend.

Glasgow newsagents and booksellers declare that the ministers—no denomination excepted—are the worst customers of theirs; they are not content with a discount of 3d. off the shilling—they want 4d., which they call clerical discount, or so much off the cloth. The men of God expect booksellers to live on air.

Under the heading "The Laureates of Labor" the *Christian Leader* devotes four columns to James Thomson (B. V.) It is what might be expected from a Christian

paper. Thomson's melancholia is made much of, and ascribed to his scepticism. "To him unbelief meant death." *Satires and Profanities*, says the *Christian Leader* writer, "makes the blood run cold. But, after all, we hold it to be no more than the ravings of demoniac possession" It would appear that Thomson was inspired by Satan. That worthy's inspiration apparently led to better poetry than that usually found among those inspired from another source.

The Rev. Albert T. King, of Middle Temple-lane, E.C., has been fined 40s. for being drunk and disorderly in the Strand.

Referring to a case of negro outrage on a young girl, the *San Antonio Express* asks this pertinent question: "Where was the Christian God when the little Vance girl suffered death at the hands of her despoiler?" The question gains force when we remember that God is depicted as slaying Uzzah for merely touching his ark, and Ananias and Sapphira for telling lies to his apostles.

A shocking crime through the Bible superstition of witchcraft has occurred near Florence. The priest of Ponte Ema said a hysterical girl of that place was possessed of a devil. He took money to say masses, but these were of no avail. So the father went to a wise woman, who told him the first person who knocked at his door was the cause of his girl's misfortune, and should be seized and put in the oven. A poor beggar woman proved to be the victim. She was nearly burnt to death.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Miss Anna Eva Fay, a well-known American spiritist medium, works some of her wonders by means of Georgie Pingree, a five-year-old boy, who is concealed beneath her ample gown, with large bustle, which she says she wears because it was a gift given from Madame Blavatsky. The boy works spirit-hands and plays musical instruments while the mejum is fast bound in the dark cabinet. So says the *Chicago Tribune*; but Miss Fay's friends declare it "a base slander."

The pretended spirit of Mary Salisbury communicated with Dr. Haussmann, who reported to the *Progressive Thinker* that she said: "For being a medium in Salem, Mass., in 1628, I was burned at the stake." No reputed witches were ever burned at Salem, though some were hung there as late as 1692.

According to *Lux ex Tenebris*, a Mexican spiritist organ, Mr. Dobson, a wealthy spiritist of Michigan, means to demonstrate in his own person the immortality of the soul. He has had a crystal coffin to contain his body so constructed that it can be hermetically sealed at a given moment. In this coffin are placed fine copper wires connected with a battery and a telegraphic apparatus. By means of these Mr. Dobson is going to assure the world that he is alive after he is dead. He stipulates that after three days the cover of the coffin shall be removed. Mr. Dobson has not, we fear, the true martyr spirit, or, instead of this stipulation, he would have desired that his immortal spirit should be kept hermetically sealed in and the coffin placed in some museum where he could, by working the battery, demonstrate his own continued existence until the last unbeliever was satisfied. But then Mr. Dobson's spirit might have a prolonged purgatory.

N.S.S. SUBSCRIPTIONS.

GENERAL FUND.—Collected at Mr. Rowney's lecture, Regent's Park, 6s. 9d.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—E. V. Sterry, 1s.; P. W. Baldwin, 2s.; M. Christopher, 1s. E. M. VANCE, assistant-sec.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 9, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. :- 11.15, "Local Option and Clubs"; at 7, "An Old Faith with a New Face."

April 16, Liverpool; 23, Bradford.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—April 9, Birmingham; 11 and 12, Chester; 16, Hall of Science, London; 17, Battersea; 23, Hall of Science, London; 26 and 27, debate at Jarrow-on-Tyne; 30, Bolton. May 7, Manchester; 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.

J. LIVINGSTONE.—Always pleased to hear from "eager readers" of the *Freethinker*. Thanks for paper.

T. CANTWELL.—We did not say that Most, the anarchist, had turned Christian. We merely said it was so reported in the newspapers. Why are you so indignant at this, when you do not scruple to make the most infamous statements about Jules Ferry? Thanks for the pamphlet, however, though it bears no date or author's name. Without better evidence than the pamphlet affords we cannot treat it as Most's.

G. C. PAOLI (Chicago).—The passages referred to may be found Luke xix. 27, and Galatians i. 8.

IRINICA.—In all old parishes, any parishioner, except a Jew, may be churchwarden. In parishes formed since 1836 the churchwardens must be churchmen. By Mr. H. Fowler's Local Government Bill all ratepayers will be eligible as parish councillors.

C. GRASON.—It was Wilberforce who admitted in Parliament that infidels had set the example of abolishing slavery. See *Parliamentary Debates*, 1798. Also his *History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America*, pp. 421—426. It is very likely Lord Brougham made a similar statement, but we cannot lay hands on it. You would find Mrs. Beecher Stowe's *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (pp. 281—317) useful. Also articles on the slavery question in the *Freethinker*, March 27 and April 3, 1887.

D. MACKAY.—The question shall be borne in mind.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Much obliged.

HULL.—Mr. G. E. Conrad Naewiger, has taken a shop at 22 Osborne-street, Hull, where he will sell the *Freethinker* and other progressive literature.

HUMANITAS.—Shall be seen to.

E. H. B. S.—Shall appear.

A. SCOPES.—Glad to hear the new Ipswich Branch is making steady progress, and is arranging for open-air lectures during the summer. In such a town we quite understand that many of your members must be passive; it is to be hoped, however, that their financial support will be all the more liberal on that account.

W. D. MCSICCAR.—See "Sugar Plums." We fancy the change will be beneficial.

JACK.—Tastes differ. Live and let live is the best policy. Make use of what you appreciate.

DORKING.—Dr. Allinson is himself our authority for saying that the libel action will cost him, after taxation, nearly £500.

O. GOODENOUGH.—The fault must lie with your newsagent. Let him insist on being supplied by his wholesale agent. We publish regularly on Thursday morning.

G. J. GILLET.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder, to whom all such communications should be sent direct.

JOSEPH BROWN.—Your letter in the *Leader* seems to us, on the whole, most sensible and timely. We take due note of the other matter.

W. H. (Manchester).—Outtings received with thanks.

J. G. DONSON.—(1) We know absolutely nothing of the James Alexander, who has been lecturing at Huddersfield, and boasting of having swept away the Secularists. If he hails from South Shields, he may be known to the local Secularists. Perhaps not. That he has "challenged" all the Freethought leaders to debate is possibly true. Many Christian idiots have done that. Still, we have no personal information in this particular case. (2) We never heard of any Common Sense Society in London.

C. A. HOOPER.—Dealt with in our leading article.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—W. C. (quarter's extra pennies), 1s. 1d.

F. RYAN.—In our next.

T. ELLIOTT.—Thanks for paper. Wait a little.

R. DOWDING, 69 Studley-road, Forest-gate, E., will distribute any Freethought literature sent to him for the purpose.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel

—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—La Raison—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Printer's Ink—Natural Food—Progressive Thinker—Spinning Wheel—Twentieth Century—Melbourne Age—De Dageraad—Echo—Humanitarian—Modern Thought—Open Court—Newcastle Daily Leader—Christian Leader—Church Reformer—Fur Unsere Jugend—Manchester Guardian—Leeds Times—Herts Advertiser—Irish Times—Richmond Examiner—Yarmouth Independent

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 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A larger than usual Easter Sunday audience met at the London Hall of Science in the evening. Most of the regular workers about the place were holiday making. Mr. Edward Truelove, however, happening to be present, was pressed into the chair. The gallant old veteran received an enthusiastic greeting as he rose to introduce the lecturer. Mr. Foote was in good form, having profited by a few days at the seaside. His lecture was freely punctuated with laughter and applause, in which the ladies joined, and the cheering at the end of the examination of the Resurrection story was quite an ovation. Mr. Truelove enjoyed himself thoroughly. He confided to the lecturer that he had never heard a lecture on the subject which pleased him so much.

Mr. Martin, at a very short notice, took Mr. Foote's place on Sunday morning, and delivered an excellent and much appreciated lecture. Mr. Foote was to have spoken on "Local Option and Clubs." He has been requested to deal with that subject this morning (April 9), and has consented to do so. In the evening Mr. Foote lectures on "An Old Faith with a New Face." He will deal with Professor Agar Beet's new book, *Through Christ to God*, so highly praised of late in the *London Chronicle*. It is a good indication of what is going on in the Churches (Dr. Beet is a Wesleyan), and contains the sort of Christianity which Freethought will have to meet in the future.

The unusually fine weather and it being Easter, somewhat interfered with Mr. Watts' audience at Birmingham last Sunday. There were, however, above the average of strangers present, who warmly applauded the lecture on "Jesus the Ascetic and Christ the God." There was a good sale of the current Special Number of the *Freethinker*. To-day, Sunday, April 9, Mr. Watts again lectures in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham in answer to the question, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?" On Tuesday and Wednesday next Mr. Watts lectures at Chester.

Mr. James Neate informs us that Mr. C. J. Hunt's meeting at Victoria Park was continually interrupted, and eventually broken up by a rowdy Christian mob, led on by the Rev. Grattan Guinness, principal of Bow College of Home and Foreign Missions. We hope all friends in the district will rally round the stand next Sunday and see that order is preserved.

Rowdy Christians roused up in Hyde Park also on Resurrection Day, and did their best to make a disturbance. They were repelled by a few sturdy Freethinkers who rallied round the platform. Our outdoor lecturers have an arduous task, which needs much tact and good humor. Freethinkers should consider it part of their duty to see they get a quiet hearing.

A Freethought demonstration in support of the open-air propaganda of the London Branches of the N.S.S. will be held, under the auspices of the London Secular Federation, at the Hall of Science, on Wednesday, April 19. The

speakers will include G. W. Foote, C. Watts, T. Parris, A. B. Moss, C. Cohen, W. Heaford, J. Rowney, H. Snell, G. Standing, etc.

All Brighton Freethinkers should rally on the Level next Sunday at 3 o'clock. Messrs. Bell, Ford, and Simmons will speak. In the evening there will be a meeting at 7.30 at the Eagle Inn, Gloucester-road, when Mr. G. J. Holyoake will give a discourse on Secularism. We trust all our Brighton friends will attend, and that these meetings will be continued throughout the summer.

The *Humanitarian*, edited by Mrs. Victoria Woodhull Morton, has in its April number an article on "Freethought as affected by Nationality and Politics."

In the *Contemporary Review* the Catholic author of "The Policy of the Pope" has a paper on "The Pope and the Bible." In opposition to "the teaching of the Church," he adopts all the rationalist conclusions as to the age of the Pentateuch, Daniel, the Psalms, etc. He shows, too, that the Bible has a most explicit and complete system of chronology which, he regrets, is erroneous. But then he claims that "our holy religion, not being founded on the Biblical records, has nothing to fear from Biblical criticism." We guess the Church does not hold so, but has good reason to fear that the same criticism which undermines the pretensions of the Bible will also dissolve those of the Church.

In his eulogistic memoir of Hippolyte Taine in the *Contemporary Review*, the French Protestant, Gabriel Monod, speaks of him as being in philosophy "of the family of Spencer, Mill, and Bain."

Mr. S. Standing reports starting outdoor work at Rochdale, where he has been lecturing during the past month. He had capital audiences.

Mr. James Hooper will lecture in Wolverhampton to-day three times. If fine, he will deliver two lectures out of doors. This will be the first occasion in the history of the town that a Freethought advocate has spoken in the open air, so we trust members will rally round our standard, ready to cope with opposition of any and every kind. The *Freethinker* will be on sale in the streets.

The Good Friday tea a soirée of the West London Branch was an unqualified success. The Milton Hall Dramatic Company gave a sketch. Songs were rendered by Messrs. Bucknill, Morgan, Nibbs, Hopes, and Hunt, and violin solos by Miss Nelly Hunt. Professor Fuller and friends provided a gymnastic display, and there was a good program of dances. Altogether the solemn day was observed most enjoyably.

The members and workers on the Children's Party Committee are requested to meet at the Hall of Science on Sunday next, for the purpose of passing and settling accounts.

The Islington Branch begins its open-air propaganda to-day (April 9) at 3.15, just without the southern boundary of Highbury Fields. Islington Freethinkers should make a point of being present. The lecturer is Mr. Hunt.

We receive from San Francisco the *Carrier Dove*, with a portrait of Mr. William Emmette Coleman, a leading American Freethinking spiritist, who has distinguished himself by his writings against Theosophy.

Light cites a portion of the "Letter to a Spiritist" from our columns, and, by referring the writer to Dr. Charcot's article on Faith-cure, seems to allow that "believing is seeing." *Light* gives the writer a deserved rap on the knuckles for speaking of nature's "laws."

Frau Hedwig Henrich Wilhelmi, the German-American Freethought lecturers, who has been laid up with a fractured leg for some time, has resumed the platform.

The Nottingham Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday. Mr. Stapleton was elected president, and Mr. W. D. McCicar secretary. It was decided to give up the tenancy of the hall in Beck-street, and seek another meeting-place. This is a step that might have been taken long ago with

advantage. The approaches to the hall were so inconvenient that visitors were repelled instead of attracted. It is to be hoped that a better habitation for the Branch will soon be discovered. Meanwhile members should watch the *Freethinker* for notices of future meetings.

WHY MEN DO NOT BELIEVE.

PREACHERS assume that the reason why men do not believe in the Bible, is because they do not understand it, and on this ground they find an excuse for their maintenance.

The assumption is false to begin with; but were it true, why maintain a class of men who, by their own varying and contradictory views, prove conclusively that they themselves do not understand it? How can they expect us to rely upon their interpretation of the Bible when scarcely any two of them can agree with each other? If the Bible was a revelation, there would be no necessity for an interpreter. The very fact that it has to be explained goes to prove conclusively that it is not a revelation.

The reason why men refuse to believe in the Bible is, in most instances, because they do not understand it, and those who believe in it most are, as a rule, the least informed as to its origin, history, and contents. There is no mystery about the Bible; it explains itself, and, considered as a human production—which it is—any ordinary mind can understand it. Speaking for ourself, and doubtless we represent many others, we reject it as a divine revelation because we do not understand it. When we were younger and knew but little about it, we were a firm believer. But after subjecting it to rational investigation, by which we came to understand its true import, our faith took wings and flew away.

Bible believers are not good Bible readers. The majority of those who believe were taught to do so while they were children and before they really knew anything about the Bible. In this way they became committed to it, contracted a reverence for it, and a prejudice against unbelievers, so that they have never put it to the test of reason.

Our advice to those who are afflicted with religious superstition is to read and study the Bible. Read its history, study its contents, and weigh its utterances, not in the fear of God, but in the dry light of reason. Don't get on your knees to study it, take an easy position, one that will aid your faculties. By this process you may get over your superstitious fears, and find out that, after all, the Bible is only a human production.

Another assumption is, that men refuse to worship God because they cannot understand him. This is as far from the truth as the other. They do understand him. They know him to be only a creature of the human imagination. They know this, not of one God, but of all the Gods; that is, all that have yet been put on exhibition. This is why they refuse to worship any of them.

If there is a God of whom we have not yet heard anything, and consequently know nothing, how would we go about worshipping him? Of such we say we know nothing; therefore we are Agnostics. We—that is, the writer—are sometimes called an Atheist, but we are not. We do not say there is no God. We simply do not know whether there is or not. We know of none, and see no reason for believing in one. On that subject we are Agnostic. As to the Gods we know nothing about—that is, the idols men worship as Gods—we are atheistic; we simply regard them as creatures of the imagination.

We do not understand all we see about us. There is mystery everywhere. The universe is full of it. There are forces that we cannot comprehend. We believe in their existence, though we cannot understand them, but there is no reason why we should deify them. They are not Gods, and we do not worship them. Ours we believe to be the only consistent position for a reasonable person to occupy; at any rate, it is the only one open to us; and on it we stand, indifferent alike to the dogmatism of the Theist and the Atheist.—*Independent Pulpit.*

An old lady to professional street Arab—"Do you go to Sunday-school, little boy?" "Naa." "Are you a Protestant?" "Naa." "A Catholic?" "Naa." "What are you, then?" "Mexican."

THE GLASGOW DEBATE.

On the 27th and 28th ult., in the Brunswick-street Hall of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S., Mr. Charles Watts held a public discussion with the Rev. Joseph Deans (Swedenborgian) of the New Church, Cathedral-street. There were numerous and well-conducted audiences. On the 27th the Chairman (Mr. John Gentler) announced that because of an unexpected change in the order of debate, Mr. Deans would open on the proposition "That Secularism is not adequate to satisfy the needs of mankind."

Mr. DEANS avowed that he felt at a great disadvantage in being obliged to canvass the merits of Secularism without having first heard his opponent's views on the subject. However, he would make a critical examination of the text of the declaration of the Principles and Objects of the N.S.S., with a copy of which the local secretary had kindly supplied him. There was much in the declaration of which he heartily approved. As for the remainder it was mere negation—in other words, nothing. The word "philosophy" occurred in the proposition under debate. Now, on reference to a standard etymological dictionary, he found that among other meanings that term denoted "coolness." The other meaning did not apply to Secularism, but the one cited was exceedingly apposite, for everyone knew that Secularism was icy cold. Then as to the word "life." Could Mr. Watts tell them what life was or how it began. Then they came to the phrase "needs of mankind"—what needs? He was afraid that they must be microscopic indeed if Secularism satisfied them. Referring to the Declaration, what did "morality" and "utility" signify, and did not the phrase "divine guidance" and "supernatural hopes and fears" presuppose knowledge of these? If so, why exclude them? Secularism was atheistic and necessitarian, and therefore divested man of every obligation to be moral and of all stimulus to worthiness of life. Secularism was sterile of good works. The grand words, Truth, Freedom and Happiness, so prominent in its vocabulary, were mere verbalisms to the Secularist, who had no criterion of truth, no belief in freedom, and no idea of happiness. Secularism was founded on superstitious conjectures, had no rational basis, was at enmity with social purity, was retrogressive, and exercised a paralyzing influence on the spirit of personal self-government. In short, Secularism was blank ignorance. Mr. Deans resumed his seat after speaking for fifteen out of the thirty minutes at his disposal.

Mr. WATTS remarked that if the persistent repetition of the counts of an indictment could constitute proof, Mr. Deans had reached the end of the debate. He was surprised that a gentleman of his opponent's status should approach the study of the subject so ill-informed and so unprepared. Throughout his speech Mr. Deans had repeatedly confounded Secularism with nothingarianism and Freethought, but it was distinct from these. A nothingarian was neither a Freethinker nor a Secularist, while, although the Secularist was always a Freethinker, the latter was not necessarily a Secularist. The Secularist held definite views as to the value and functions of personal and social life. Although, strictly speaking, it was not his business to expound Secularism until the following evening, he would oblige Mr. Deans with an outline of his position. Mr. Watts then read a statement of the six cardinal principles of Secularism. A definition of morality had been called for. The elements of conduct emerged whatever collective action was found among men. Ethics existed independently of theology, and in attestation of this conclusion, passages were quoted from Jeremy Taylor, Whately, Bacon, etc.

Mr. DEANS refused to admit that there was any valid distinction between the terms Freethinker and Secularist. They had had certain rules of conduct posited, but no demonstration of their practical enforcement. Again he asked, what is there distinctive in Secularism? Theology granted all that Secularism claimed as exclusively its own, especially liberty of conscience. He wondered that a word like "cardinal" should be employed by Mr. Watts—it had such a sacerdotal ring about it. As for Mr. Watts's version of Secularism, he declined to discuss it; he preferred the N.S.S. Declaration. The power of environment in the formation of character had been mentioned. He denied any such power. Subjective processes were the factors in the case. Once more he challenged his opponent to name his criterion of truth. A passage had been read from Tyndall to certify the integrity and nobility of character of some individual Atheists, but he was not concerned with persons, he impeached the system. Mr. Watts had spoken of the prospect that the Secularist

possessed of a "safe and happy death." Whatever did that mean? It seemed to him nonsensical. Then the words husband and wife were used; and what did they import for the Secularist?

Mr. WATTS rebutted the charge that his statement of the principles of Secularism differed in any essential from that of the N.S.S. All Secularists would assent to both. Besides, Mr. Deans had expressly solicited (Mr. Watts's) exposition of Secularism on the plea that, in default of that information, he was at a loss how to proceed. Yet all the while he had prepared his notes and was arguing from the N.S.S. Declaration. Such a procedure was neither fair nor straightforward. It had been urged that Secularists must be Atheists; but, as a matter of fact, many Secularists were not Atheists. However, on the score of moral doctrine he was ready to defend atheistic morality, and even to admit that it was essentially secularistic. A definition of Truth was demanded. That was true which was pronounced to be so by the best knowledge and the greatest intellects. Truth was relative and not absolute, and trained reason alone enabled us to determine it. The scientific doctrine of the influence of environment traversed Mr. Deans's dictum. Objection had been taken to the phrase "divine guidance" and the term "supernatural" in the Declaration. By the first he understood the belief in the alleged divine, and by the second the pseudo-idea of something beyond nature. He acknowledged the superhuman, but knew nothing of the supernatural. It was just because of his ignorance of both that the Secularist excluded them from the sphere of the practical. In compliance with Mr. Deans's request, Mr. Watts gave his definition of the terms "life" and "philosophy," adding the pleasantry that, like a good child, he had given his friend all that he had asked for, and would perhaps give him more than he wanted before the debate was over. Mr. Deans condemned Secularism as necessitarian. Would he explain if he held that man was absolutely or partially free?

Mr. DEANS read a passage from the Bradlaugh-McCann debate, taken from Mr. Watts' writings, in which virtue and vice are described as results of natural law. Reverting to the question of environment, Did man make the circumstances, or did the circumstances make the man? Mr. Watts failed to show how relinquishment of belief in the supernatural helps society, or what science there is to test conduct. Ignorance (that is Secularism) can never benefit the world. He had to repeat his demand for definitions. There had been plenty of assertion, but no argument, although his opponent had had more time than himself. There can't be atheistic morality, for Mr. Bradlaugh, in his *Plea for Atheism*, stated that every child was born into the world an Atheist—that is, in a state of blank ignorance, which was therefore identical with Atheism.

Mr. WATTS accepted the full responsibility for the passage cited. Necessitarianism—not as Mr. Deans put it—was an inextinguishable principle, whether on scientific or logical grounds. His opponent professed to have gone over his (Mr. Watts') points *seriatim*, but in that case he had strangely omitted to notice his enunciations of the Principles of Secularism. He had been silent as to the nature of free-will, and they were still benighted as to the supernatural. There was likewise a significant reticence as to any authority higher than Reason. No doubt it might be inconvenient for Mr. Deans to mention the guide which he thinks to be better—namely, Christianity. Mr. Watts concluded with an eloquent vindication of Secularism from the aspersions of triteness and fruitlessness cast upon it by Mr. Deans.

[A Report of the Second Night's Debate will appear in our next].

OBITUARY.

We regret to record the death of Mr. J. D. Nieass: We believe he was a Freethinker. At any rate, he was a sturdy Radical, and one of Charles Bradlaugh's surest supporters in his long parliamentary struggle. Mr. Nieass was a Radical of the old school, well-informed, thoughtful, and cautious while enthusiastic. For fifty years he fought the good fight of progress. Every advanced movement had his ungrudging assistance. He was a working man, never in very good circumstances, and his career should be an example to young reformers. They may enjoy the greater light of a later generation, but they will find it hard to exceed his steady devotion to liberty, justice, and progress.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ARE THE CLERGY STATE PAID?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I little desire to occupy even the smallest space in your crowded columns with unnecessary matter, but in view of the arrant, acrimonious, and protracted nonsense in current circulation, perhaps you will allow me to add to the remarks concerning State-paid clergy which you published in the *Freethinker* of February 5, and later in answer to a correspondent in your issue of March 19, 1893.

It appears to be quite true that Mr. Gladstone once wrote in reply to an inquirer on one of his proverbial postcards, that "The clergy of the Church of England are not State-paid." This, of course, bears the imprint of non-solution. It is neither definite nor precise, and the result is that many extremely erroneous opinions are abroad; but being asked by another interested disestablishmentarian correspondent whether his answer was to be understood as meaning that, in the event of the Church of England being disestablished, Government would not have sufficient vindication in disendowing it also, he furnished the following reading: "His general views as to the powers of the State in regard to Church and corporate property are to be found recorded in the debates on the Irish Church in 1864, 1868, and 1869, and may be inferred from his conduct in regard to the Irish Church." I got to *Hansard's Debates*, and thus the result:

"If I am asked what it is that, in endeavoring to put an end to the present Establishment, I renounce for the future, I would again say that that which I renounce for the future is the attempt to maintain, in association with the State, under the authority of the State, or supported by the income of the State, or by public or national property in any form, a salaried or stipendiary clergy."—*March 30, 1868.*

"The Church Establishment, regarded in its theory and in its aim, is beautiful and attractive. Yet what is it but an appropriation of public property, an appropriation of the fruits of labor and of skill to certain purposes?"—*March 30, 1868.*

"The Church of England is a State Church. . . . It seems to me that those friends of the Church of England, if they may be so called, greatly weaken her, who are in the habit of picturing her condition, supposing she was deprived of State endowments, as one altogether to be deplored. . . . receiving support from the State."—*April 30, 1868.*

"When I look to Ireland I see a great system of State endowment. . . . This great system of State endowment and establishment should be brought to a close."—*May 7, 1868.*

"It was well understood . . . that the system of Church Establishment in Ireland must be brought thoroughly and completely to a close; that although the word 'Disendowment' was never embodied in any Resolution of this House . . . yet, as a general rule, and for every substantial purpose and effect, an end must likewise be put to the system of the public endowment of religion in Ireland."—*March 1, 1869.*

"It was for the nation that the property was given. It is true it was given to corporations. Yes; but why? Not that they might enjoy it as private property, but that they might hold it on condition of duty. They were only convenient symbols—convenient media for its conveyance from generation to generation. The real meaning, scope, and object was that through them it should be applied for all time to the benefit of the entire population of the kingdom, and this was a natural and intelligent arrangement when the entire nation was of one faith. In proportion as Dissent and differences of opinion crept into the country, the foundation of the religious Establishment so endowed comes to be by degrees more or less weakened and impaired, partly in proportion as the number of Dissenters is strong, partly in proportion as they are disposed, or not disposed, to acquiesce in the continuance of the Establishment."—*March 23, 1869.*

"Why are we to establish in this Bill a separate category for private endowments, and dividing them from the mass of what we affirm to be a national property, namely, the property of the Church?"—*April 29, 1869.*

The clergy are State paid, and the manner of payment, as you say, "makes no difference." Whatever Mr. Gladstone may mean when he says they are not paid by the State, he has distinctly and deliberately confessed elsewhere that the property by which they are maintained is "public property," or, as some hypercritical people prefer to put it, "national property"; that it constitutes a great system of State endowments; and that when the Church of England is disestablished it must also be disendowed, I demur against the misapplication of his statement by those who show an absolute ignorance of the subject upon which they so glibly dogmatise. The passages quoted sufficiently indicate Mr. Gladstone's views on the subject of Church property in the years and dates of their expression named. They need no comment.—Yours, etc.,

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

BOOK CHAT.

Mrs. Julia Garrett, of Los Angeles, who claims to have been "before the public twelve years as a medium for independent slate-writing, materialisation, raps, platform tests, picture, clairvoyance and clairaudience, trumpet-talking, and every other phase of mediumship," has published a work entitled *Mediums Unmasked*, in which she says: "I have never known a medium who did not hate and despise spiritualism. No medium believes in the return of spirits, and anyone of them would, I believe, be frightened half to death at sight of a ghost. After my long experience I now solemnly declare that all, absolutely all the so-called spiritual phenomena, are false; and, furthermore, that the mediums well know it, being engaged in the nefarious business of deliberately deceiving foolish people for money in such varying ways as I point out in the following pages." The frank admission that she has been a swindler for twelve years may lead to Mrs. Garrett's explanations being taken *cum grano salis*.

Catholic Canada has had a thunderbolt in the shape of an exposure of *Clerical Rule*, written by several of the leading young French Canadian writers, such as M. Sauvalle, editor of *La Patrie*, and M. Filiatrault, editor of the *Canada Revue*. The work consists of sixteen chapters, each devoted to a different phase of clericalism. It shows that the Church is simply ruining the country, gathering from bad sources more money into the ecclesiastical treasury of Quebec than there is in all the banks in Canada. French Canadians are forced to the United States to escape religious taxation. The sinister influence of the Church on morals in the confessional is also pointed out.

Mr. William Watson, the poet, who is happily recovered from his temporary breakdown, has in the press a new work, entitled *The Eloping Angels*. It is said to depict a visit paid to Paradise by Faust, conducted by Mephistopheles, with the result of showing "the dulness of entire felicity."

Mr. Benjamin R. Tucker's volume is to be entitled *Instead of a Book: by a Man too Busy to Write One*. The work will consist of a classified collection of Mr. Tucker's writings for his paper *Liberty*, and is intended to serve as a text-book of philosophical Anarchism.

The fourth volume of M. Renan's *Histoire d'Israel* will be published in May.

The current number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* is specially interesting for its posthumous article by Renan on "The Jews under Greek Dominion." M. Renan shows that the doctrine of immortality only crept into Jewish religion when things were at their worst under foreign tyranny, and when there was no other means possible of vindicating the goodness of God. A free and contented people think little of happiness hereafter; that comes as a consolation to despair.

Previously, says M. Renan, the Hebrews had rejected as chimerical all the forms of belief under which other peoples figured such an ultra-mundane existence. For man there was no other life than this. God alone was eternal. An immortal man would be a rival of God, an impossibility. The date is nearly fixed when the affirmation of this pious belief—it was never formulated as a dogma—afforded Israel an escape from a doctrinal dilemma. Heaven was invented as an excuse for Jehovah's supineness.

The April number of the *New Review* has several items of interest to Freethinkers. There is a paper by the late Ernest Renan on "Israel's Deep Slumber," briefly reviewing the decadent period following the time of Nehemiah. There is a study of John Morley; another of Mrs. Grote under the title of "People I have Known," by Maria Simpson; a review of Walter Pater's *Plato and Platonism*, by Edmund Gosse; a study of her earlier days by Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, entitled "When Plancus was Consul"; and an instalment of a new novel by Bjornson.

Mr. C. L. James, of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, who we believe is a son of Mr. G. P. R. James, has sent out a prospectus of a *General History of the World* in five volumes. The work is to deal rather with the details of social and domestic life, wages, prices, amusements, literature, religion and philosophy, than with kings, statesmen, battles, treaties, etc. Mr. James

proposes to prove that the prevalence of the spirit of individual liberty among any people has been the exact measure of their success, not only morally and artistically, but, what was perhaps less to be expected, economically. Naturally Greece comes largely to the front in any such historic thesis. Mr. James holds that the imitative impulse, though it has filled an important function in the evolution of society, stands in no need of encouragement, but, on the contrary, all disposition to follow others needs preaching down. Judging from the prospectus, which appears in the *Twentieth Century*, we should think Mr. James's book one well deserving publication, and we trust he will receive the necessary encouragement.

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A new quarterly magazine entitled *The Liberty Review* (Watts and Co.), edited by Frederick Millar, appears this April, and is declared to be "devoted to the Defence of Freedom and of the Right of Property." It bears as motto Lord Bramwell's saying, "Please govern me as little as possible." Among the contributors are Yves Guyot, G. H. M. Owen, G. Candy, Wordsworth Donisthorpe, and E. S. Robertson.

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The *Athenæum*, noticing Mr. Leslie Stephen's *Agnostic's Apology*, calls it "a strong piece of destructive criticism. Nor," it adds, "do we recall any similar work of recent appearance which can compare with this in the closeness and comprehension of its argument."

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.]

Secretaries may send in a month's list of lectures in advance.

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, H. Snell, "The Ascent of Man," and dramatic recital" (2d. and 4d.); social after the lecture. Tuesday at 8, dancing (free).

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, Mrs. Louisa Samson, "Is the Bible the Friend of Woman?"

Camberwell—81 New Church-road, S.E.: 4.30, general meeting of members; 6, tea and entertainment (members 6d., friends 9d.) Friday at 7.30, free science classes (hygiene and astronomy).

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, Arthur Brooke, "Land Nationalisation."

Edmonton—North Middlesex Hall, Fore-street: 7, C. Cohen, "Religion and Freethought."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "Local Option and Clubs" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "An Old Faith with a New Face" (3d., 6d., and 1s.) Wednesday at 8, Stanley Jones, "An Impeachment of Christianity" (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, C. James, "Heresy: a Plea for Mental Freedom."

Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, H. Snell, "Is Christianity Played Out?" 3.30, C. Durrant, "The Resurrection."

Hammersmith—The Grove: Thursday at 8, a lecture.

Hammersmith Bridge: 6.30, W. Heaford, "Christ as Teacher and Exemplar."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Science and Christianity"; 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Life of Jesus."

Islington—Highbury Fields (southern corner, near Highbury Station): 3.15, C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

Old Picnic Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Secularism v. Christianity."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Life of Jesus."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, W. Heaford, "What is Christianity?" 3.15, "C. Cohen, "A Program for the Year."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, S. H. Alison, "Satan's Pedigree."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, members' quarterly meeting; 7, Charles Watts, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave—the Question Answered."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, members' meeting; 2.45, Sunday-school for children; 7, popular concert and entertainment.

Derby—Mission Hall, top of Sacheverel-street, Normanton-road: Monday at 7.30, adjourned quarterly meeting.

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick street: 12, discussion class; R. Laurie, "The Philosophy of Plato"; 6.30, J. Wallace, "The Holy Fair."

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, J. Sketchley, "What is Socialism?"

Ipswich—Co-operative Hall (small room), Cox-lane: 7, meeting of members.

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

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11.30, Tontine Society; 3, philosophy class; 7, A. Member, "Curiosities of Superstition."

Manchester—Corbridge's Hotel, Lever-street: Tuesday at 8, Sam Stranding, "Witchcraft."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 6.30, J. Wood, "An Hour with American Humorists"; musical selections. Tuesday at 8, debating circle, J. Wood, "Capital Punishment."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' fortnightly meeting; 7, E. Copland, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 6.30, business meeting.

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting

Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7, Mr. Jones, a reading.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 3, members' quarterly meeting; 7, "musical and other recitals."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting; 7.30, C. H. Reynolds, "Will the National Adoption of Malthusianism Improve the Economic Condition of the Wage-workers?"

Wolverhampton—Athenæum Assembly Room, Queen-street: 11 and 3, members' meetings; 7, James Hooper, "God's Special Favorites" (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Bradford—James-street, Godwin-street: 6.30, John Grange will lecture.

Rochdale—Town Hall-square: 3.15, debate between Sam Stranding and Adam Hill on "Jael and Sisera"; 6.30, Sam Stranding, "What is Christianity?"

Wolverhampton—Lichfield-street (near the fountain): 11.30, James Hooper, "The Established Church: its Origin and Deeds"; 3.30, at Snow Hill (near the Villiers' statue), James Hooper, "The Ten Commandments and how they are Kept"; if wet these lectures will be delivered in the Athenæum.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W.—April 9, m., Wood Green; 16, Manchester; 23, m., Hyde Park. May 7, m., Wood Green; e., Lambeth; 14, m., Battersea; a., Islington; 21, m., Camberwell; 28, m., Midland Arches; e., Lambeth.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—April 9, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 16 and 17, Portsmouth; 23, a., Victoria Park; e., Camberwell; 30, Ipswich.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 9, m., Islington; 16, m., Mile End; a., Finsbury Park; 23, m., Battersea; 30, m., Hyde Park; a., Finsbury Park; e., Hammersmith. May 7, m., Bethnal Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow; 14 to 21, annual tour; 28, m., Islington; e., Kilburn.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—April 12, Hall of Science; 24 and 25, Sunderland; 29, Arbroath 30, Aberdeen. May 7, Edinburgh.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 16, Hyde Park; 23, Hammersmith; 30, Wood Green. May 7, m., Camberwell; 14, e., Camberwell; 21, m., Westminster; a., Finsbury; 28, m., Wood Green; e., Hammersmith.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 16, Bristol; 30, Hall of Science. May 7, Camberwell.

J. ROWNEY, 1 Dufferin avenue, E.C.—April 9 to June 25, m., Regent's Park; a., Hyde Park.

H. SNELL, 8 Monk-street, Woolwich.—April 9, m., Finsbury; e., Battersea; 14, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell; 23, Birmingham; 30, m., Westminster; a., Victoria Park. May 7, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Woolwich; 14, m., Camberwell; 28, m., Hyde Park; a., Regent's Park.

SAM STANDING, 2 Morton-street, C-on-M, Manchester.—April 9, Rochdale; 11, Manchester; 16, Hull; 30, Sheffield.

St. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—April 16, m., Finsbury Park; 23, m., Victoria Park. May 14, m., Hyde Park; 21, m., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith; 28, m., Bethnal Green.

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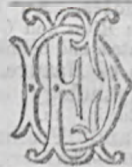
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