

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

AN OPEN LETTER.

TO JESUS, THE CHRIST,—Pardon me if I do not give you all the titles which you are accustomed to bear in your present station, as I am totally unacquainted with them. I might have called you his excellency; but, if I remember aright, you repudiated a title equivalent to that when you were preaching among the illiterate Jews of Palestine, and told them not to call you good. I thought of calling you by the title that our modern preachers are so fond of writing before their names, and addressing you as the Rev. Jesus Christ; but I felt that such an address might be resented as an insult, in view of the character of those who have arrogated it to themselves for the past nineteen hundred years, or ever since your personal influence was withdrawn from them. I have, therefore, addressed you simply by your name and the title which, I learn, you once accepted. (See Matt. xiv. 16, 17.)

We are told by one of the earliest "Fathers of the Church" that you once received and answered a letter from one Abgarus, after you had left this earth and gone back to heaven, in which correspondence you condescended to show to Abgarus the truth about yourself and the doctrines you preached while you were here. This encourages me to address you at this time upon matters vitally important, not only to myself, but also to you and the religion you strove so hard to establish.

It is quite certain that the religion which goes by your name—Christianity—is in a very bad way. If you could but come down here, on some Sunday say—for they have adopted that day for the Sabbath, instead of the one you appointed for them; probably thinking that you would be less likely to catch them on that old heathen holiday worshipping the sun—you would swear that they had gone back to heathenism, and were worshipping idols, or false gods. So exactly are they copying the old heathen forms and ceremonies, their holy days, their feasts and fasts, their gods and goddesses—which they now call saints—that all men who have made a study of religion find no difference in them, except in the increased rapacity of the priests of our later day. You would never guess that you had gotten into a Christian church if you looked around you at the splendid temple, the velvet cushions and carpets, the rich robes, the gorgeous ceremonies, and the satellites of the priests moving about collecting the money tribute of the credulous worshippers. You would ask, where are the poor, the mourners, the people with whom you used to associate and sympathise? You would be told—if they condescended to tell you anything—that fellows like you might be found at the Secular meeting down the street, but this church was no place for such as you.

If, then, you should drop in at the Secular meeting, you would find a faithful few, seekers for truth, and ready to accept it whenever it was made manifest to them. Among these faithful few I am proud to class myself, and for these, as well as for myself, I make this appeal to you.

It is said that when your disciple, Thomas, doubted the truth of your resurrection from the grave, you promptly furnished him with the proof, as was right and proper that you should. Now, we are in precisely the same position as Thomas. We have not been furnished with the proof, and, therefore, we doubt. We ask that we shall be treated as well as Thomas, and that the evidence be furnished to all mankind impartially, so that all men know it, "from the

least unto the greatest." You must know—if you know anything at all of what is going on here below—that we have very little information about you, and that little we have is not very reliable, not being corroborated by any contemporary history. We would wish, therefore, that you furnish us with the evidence to prove the following points: First, were you really and truly the Son of God, and the only son that he ever begot? And please to state as to the *modus operandi* of that begetting, and whether and how it differed from the methods of Jove, Jupiter, and hundreds of other gods who have been famous for exploits of that kind. If you say that it differed from the ordinary human method of doing such things, please tell us why it was necessary to have a human mother, any more than a human father?

In the Old Testament we read that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and took to them wives of all which they chose." The result was that a race of giants was born. Now, two or three questions suggest themselves upon this statement. It seems that you could not have been the only begotten Son of God, else all these other sons of God were spurious, and begotten by somebody else, and consequently were not sons of God. Then, as the evidence that all these were sons of God rests upon the same divine book, and one or the other must certainly be wrong, you will readily see that the question of illegitimacy is doubtful as between you and them.

Again, this miscegenation of the divine with the human, as told in Genesis, produced a race of giants who were wicked, and who corrupted all the rest of mankind. Such a crossing of races almost always turns out bad. Were you a giant, and did you turn out like all these other sons of God?

Another little matter needs clearing up, and that is your genealogy. One of the gospel writers gives us twenty-eight generations from David down to you, while another gives us forty-three for the same time; and, strange to say, no two names in the different lists are alike, except David at one end and Joseph at the other. Now, this might be accounted for by saying that this was a mistake of one or the other, if we found it in a human production; but these gospels are said to be the word of God himself, a revelation of facts that he thought it necessary that we should know. If this is true, the theory of a mistake cannot be entertained, and it follows as certainly as a mathematical demonstration that these gospels are not the word of God. Then again, the name of Joseph being given in both lists as your father is a direct contradiction of the claim that you are the Son of God. Joseph himself seems to have known that he was not your father, and was disposed to "cut up" a little about it; but, after dreaming that the Holy Ghost had been there before him, he became satisfied, and, in proper time, married, and took the place of the Ghost. Of course, if Joseph was satisfied with the evidence of a dream, it is no business of ours, as far as he and his wife were concerned; but when we are asked to believe in the dream as evidence of the fact, then we must say that the evidence is not sufficient to convince our minds, even though damnation should be the penalty for not believing. We might be scared into saying we believed, but we wouldn't believe nevertheless. You see our difficulty: as honest men we doubt the fact of your being the Son of God, resting, as it does, on no evidence but the statement of Joseph that he dreamed that it was so; in fact, we have not even that, for Joseph himself does not say he dreamed, but only some unknown person says so for him.

After you were born we are told that Joseph dreamed again that an angel told him to get up and go to Egypt with his family, because Herod, king of Judea, would try to kill you. Accordingly, he put you and your mother on a donkey, and fled to Egypt. And Herod sent and killed all the children in Bethlehem under two years of age. God seems to have cared very little about all the rest of the little children in Bethlehem as long as he saved you; and that is some little evidence—perhaps circumstantial, no doubt, but admit it for what it is worth—that he is your father. But would not it have been better to have sent the angel to Herod, instead of to Joseph, with a club to knock his brains out, and thus save all those little children? But there is another circumstance that shows the unreliability of dreams as evidence, and that is that Herod had been dead four years before you were born, as is abundantly proved by authentic history.

We need not waste any tears over these little innocents, because Herod, being dead, could not have killed them; and Matthew, the only one of the gospel writers who tells the story, is not corroborated by either of the other three; in fact, Luke expressly contradicts him by showing that there was no flight into Egypt, but that you remained in Judea and Nazareth till you were fully grown.

You see how the difficulties multiply around us when we come to search the scriptures and try to find out just what is true about you. But the matter becomes worse—more obscure—as we proceed: like Paddy's ale, "it thickens as it clears."

We are told that you formulated "the most perfect code of morals that was ever given to man." It is, perhaps, unnecessary to say that those who make the loudest claims to be your disciples and followers do not allow that code to have the slightest influence upon their conduct. But modern research has discovered in old books, written a thousand years before your time, the same moral code that is claimed as yours. Of course, that code is no worse—or better either—for being old; but surely it was not necessary for God to go to all the trouble and expenditure of time to take upon himself a human form just to come down here to repeat a lot of rules for human conduct, that contained nothing new, nothing but that which man had worked out for himself long before, without any of his help. All that parade of angels to announce the coming, the performance of the Holy Ghost, the wise men of the East, the shepherds, the new star made expressly for the occasion, and much more of the same sort—all for the purpose of teaching to the world a lot of old chesnuts, "In the name of the prophet—Figs!"

It would appear by the record that you yourself did not act quite up to the rules that you taught; that you did not always return good for evil, or very heartily love your enemies. Your denunciations of the Pharisees smacked a good deal of party feeling, and was much in the style of the Tammany hall politician; and the assault and battery upon the money-changers in the temple—who were pursuing a lawful and very useful business—cannot be made to square with your professions in the Sermon on the Mount. So the cursing of the fig-tree, because it did not have figs out of season, does not seem to convey any very exalted moral lesson, but rather shows a childish spite that we would not expect of you. I mention these little things, not because it affords us any pleasure to pick flaws in your character, but for the purpose of showing that you have been represented—misrepresented, no doubt—as inconsistent in your character and teaching, and to justify ourselves for disbelieving that you ever could have acted the part that the gospels declare you did. We cannot believe that the same person who preached the Sermon on the Mount said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." The two expressions are utterly inconsistent and antagonistic. We prefer to think that whoever concocted the so-called gospels copied from the much older sacred books of the more civilised heathen nations, and that in this conglomeration of various notions, from various peoples of differing civilisation and culture, these inconsistencies were lumped together.

We have appealed to your pretended servants, the clergy, to clear up these palpable difficulties, and we have been answered only with curses. They refuse even to listen to our supplications for instruction. Their language, their looks, and their actions show conclusively that they know no more about you and your teachings than do the Hottentots of South Africa, or the average convert of Sam-

Jones's revival meeting. We, therefore, come to headquarters for this, our petition for light. All we want is to know the truth. If you are God, or even one third of God, you know the purity of our intentions and the honest desire of our hearts. As you answered the letter of Abgarus, so answer us in such a manner as shall leave no doubt as to the source from which it comes, and resolve all our doubts about your existence or authority. And permit me to say, with all due reverence, if you do not answer this appeal, we shall consider the evidence conclusive that the whole story of your existence, actions, and teaching is a myth, and unworthy of credence by any rational person.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

NAMES.

WHEN Juliet asked, "What's in a name?" she implied that the mass of mankind made very much of names, though she herself wished it were otherwise. The fact that she was a Capulet, and Romeo a Montagu, sufficed to make their loves a tragedy. Much is in a name, as the person who had the misfortune to be named Mahershalal-hashbaz Mumps probably found out. Hood says:

A name! If the party had a voice,
What mortal would be a Bugg by choice?

To the historical student names tell much. Bible names, for instance, are not found in baptismal registers before 1560, showing when the old Jew books came into vogue in England. To the Puritan period we owe the introduction of such Christian names as Patience, Prudence, Faith, Hope, Charity, Mercy, and more peculiar ones such as Tribulation, Renewed, Zeal of the Lord, What God will, etc. Everyone has heard of Praise-God Barbone, after whom the Parliament of 1653 was named. Barbone's Parliament.

Praise-God Barbone, M.P., had two brothers, named respectively "Jesus-Christ-came-into-the-world-to-save Barbone," and "If-Christ-had-not-died-for-thee-thou-hadst-been-damned Barbone." Brook, in his *History of the Puritans*, implies that they were thus baptised, but Hume says, with more probability, that they were adopted names. He adds, in regard to the latter, that his acquaintances were so wearied with its length that they styled him by the last word as "Damned Barbone." The editor of *Notes and Queries* says that, "as his morals were not of the best, this abbreviated form appeared to suit him better than his entire baptismal prefix." Whether the title was given at the font or adopted, there is no doubt that he was familiarly known as Dr. Damned Barbone. This, as Mr. Bardsley, in his book on *Puritan Nomenclature*, observes, was more curt than courteous.

As such names fix their period, so something of the real history of Jews may be traced through their nomenclature. A study of Bible names helps to disclose the nature of Bible myths.

Dr. Thomas Inman wrote a learned, and now scarce, work, *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, in which he found remnants of phallic worship in many names, and particularly in Hebrew ones. His work, he says, was the result of an inquiry, how it comes to pass that John and Jack are synonymous. The question, once propounded, led on to such other names as Elizabeth, Isabella, William, and Bill, and, in prosecuting it, he found a whole curious history of the past unfolding before him. Doubtless Dr. Inman made overmuch of the phallic view, but he certainly unearthed some curious matters.

In my paper on "Phallic Worship Among the Jews," in *Bible Studies*, I adduced evidence from the Bible names to show that the Jews were originally worshippers of Baal. No legitimate child was ever given such a name as Ishbosheth, "a man of shame" (2 Samuel ii. 8-10); nor Mophibosheth, "mouth of shame" (2 Samuel iv. 4). When we find, as we do from 1 Chronicles viii. 33 and 34, that the names of Saul's son and grandson were Esh-baal and Merib-baal, we see that the more read books of Samuel have been altered, while the later Chronicles preserves an earlier form; and the fact that Saul, Jonathan, and David did not scruple to give their sons names compounded with Baal throws a flood of light on the religion of that time. Other instances of change are Baal-jadah (1 Chronicles xiv. 7) turned to Eliada (2 Samuel v. 16). Baalmeon,

built by the Reubenites, is turned into Bethmeon in Jeremiah xlviii. 23, and is probably the Beon of Numbers xxxii. 3. Note the name rendered Bealaiah in 1 Chronicles xii. 5. It really is בעליה, Baaljah, meaning my Baal is Jah. The name clearly tells us that in David's time the word Baal did not convey any idea of objectionable idolatry. Baal and Jah were but two names for the same deity. The fact is confirmed in Hosea ii. 16, when Jah himself says: "Thou shalt call me Ishi, and shall call me no more Baali." The place where the ark stood, afterwards known as Kirjathjearim, was formerly named Baalah, or place of Baal (1 Chronicles xiii. 6). The change of name took place after David's time, since 2 Samuel vi. 2 says that David went with the ark from Baale of Judah. Thus a study of Bible names alone would show that the Jews in early times worshipped Baal, and that Jeremiah was right when he said: "According to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to Bosheth, altars to burn incense unto Baal."

We find, too, that compounds with the sacred name יהוה, Jo and Jeho at the beginning and iah at the end, only come in after the time of David, although the Lord says, in Exodus, that he made his name known to Moses, and Balaam cursed in the name of Jahveh. Then we have Eliakim, God-erects, changed into Jehoiakim, Coniah into Jeconiah, Shallum into Jehohaz, etc., all suggestive of the later and royal worship of Jah.

From some of the early names of the Bible it has been surmised that animal totems were once common, and perhaps worshipped. Thus we have Caleb, a dog; Nahash, a serpent; Shual, a fox; Leib, a wolf; Arieh, a lion; Aiah, a vulture; Jonah, a dove; Dag, a fish; Rachel, a ewe; Chevan, a lamb; Deborah, a bee; Dishan, a gazelle; etc. The reference to animals in Jacob's blessing on the twelve tribes in Genesis xlix. has been taken as showing that they had animals as their totems, crests, or standards.

Momen est omen said the Latins and the Hebrews certainly made names ominous. Thus Jahveh is made to say to David, "His name shall be Solomon [peace], and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days"—which suggests that the name may have been given afterwards, as with Eve [life], "because she was the mother of all living." Abram is the exalted Father; Sarah, the celestial mother, or princess; Jacob means supplanted, and he supplanted his brother Esau. The writer speaks of them as if their appellations were prophetic, given at birth, on account of something which happened afterwards. This is part of the evidence that the stories are mythical. Achan signifies he that troubles, and he was burnt for troubling Israel; Cozbi, the Midianitish woman, for whom the Israelites were plagued, means a liar. Such names were probably subsequent inventions to fit the story as much as Giant Despair, in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. We have exactly the same kind of myth in the New Testament. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus [savior], for he shall save his people from their sins." Possibly he was called Jesus because he was previously held to be a savior.

J. M. WHEELER.

LIBERTY AND INDIVIDUALISM.

It should be distinctly understood that the views here stated upon certain methods now before the public for the social amelioration of the people are not necessarily those of all Secularists. I alone am responsible for the opinions herein advanced. But in expressing those views I exercise my right as a Freethinker, and, at the same time, perform the duty that is incumbent upon all Secularists—namely, to do their best, humble though it may be, to contribute to the solution of those problems that have a direct bearing upon the well-being of the general community.

In previous articles that have recently appeared in this journal I have recorded my sense of abhorrence at the violent and worse than useless advocacy of Anarchism; and I have also expressed my inability to accept the entire program of State Socialism, while acknowledging that it contains many commendable features. Individualism, rightly understood, appears to me to contain elements far more likely to be successful in the warfare against existing social wrongs than those to be found in the other two systems named. To me, history records the important

lesson that progress has been the result of personal effort, allied with the principle of co-operation. In all probability our social system would not have been in its present deplorable condition had our predecessors depended more upon themselves and less upon others in their attempts to get rid of the legacies of aristocratic and ecclesiastical rule. True, indeed, are the words of Edwin Arnold in his *Light of Asia*: "Within yourselves deliverance must be sought. Each man his prison makes."

According to my view of Individualism, it does not mean that the will and benefit of the individual should be considered without due regard being paid to the rights and requirements of others; neither does it imply that Government help should be entirely ignored. We have to take society as it is, and, unfortunately, it is burdened with many laws bequeathed from the past, and these laws, in several instances, render individual effort of but little avail. Hence, it is necessary to have a Government that should abrogate such laws, and thus clear the way for personal work in the cause of general reform. If it be contended that all Government aid is an evil, it would be interesting to learn how, in the present condition of affairs, the rights and comforts of the individual could be secured and protected without it. While, however, in my opinion, some form of government is necessary, we must not forget that it should be a government based upon the freely-expressed will of the people. It is not the king, the government, or the aristocracy; these, as Thomas Paine said, are not "distinguished and separate elements of human power . . . but, as there is but one species of man, there can be but one element of human power, and that element is man himself." A Government is the outcome of Individualism, consisting of a body of men elected by the people to give force to their decisions, and to protect the greater portion of the community from the effects of the actions of its more selfish members, whose only consideration is the gratification of their own personal desires, irrespective of the rights and wishes of others.

These perverters of the true philosophy of Individualism parade the delusion that all modern legislation has a tendency to slavery. With them it is "every one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." It is said that subjection, as applied to political rule, implies slavery; but an important feature is here overlooked. Subjection by assent or consent is in no way inconsistent with liberty. No greater contrast is possible than individual subjection for the general good, and general subjection without choice for the advantage of the individual. The difference between slavish and free legislation is this: the first aims at glorifying kings and rulers, while the second aims at securing the good of the people. The liberty of the individual consists in his being master of his own actions in so far as his conduct is consistent with the laws of his country and the welfare of the community; while the liberty of the people in general consists in their being governed by laws of their own making or adoption. Slavery, when applied to legislation, means the imposition of laws irrespective of the will of the nation, or in opposition to its desires. It does not necessarily imply the infliction of any physical injury, but it does involve the exercise of arbitrary power, which is inconsistent with the freedom of the intellect. My idea of a Government that is in harmony with the principle of liberty is one in which every citizen, male and female, who retains his or her right of citizenship, should be consulted in its formation. To answer the question, "Has modern legislation tended to slavery?" we have to ascertain whether the legislation of the last fifty years or so has extended or limited political power among the people. If the former, it has been in favor of liberty; if the latter, it has tended to slavery.

The extension of the power of the people over Parliament is a well-known feature in modern legislation. The limitation of the power of the aristocracy in 1832, and of the control upon the part of the moneyocracy in 1867, necessarily extended the political influence of the masses. These two reforms dealt a blow to political slavery, and perhaps may be regarded as the birth of modern national freedom, which is still slowly, but surely, increasing. They relieved the country of unjust imposts and abolished tyrannical laws, and these were followed by free importation of food, the removal of the stamp and paper duties, and the establishment of a national system of education. In our own time the right has been won for an Atheist to sit in Parliament, and for unbelievers to affirm rather than

be compelled to swear. Moreover, the property of women has been protected by legislation, and, in some cases, their civil rights have been recognised. These are marked indications of a liberation from slavery that for centuries made woman a mere serf to the despotic will of man. The formation of Parish Councils will undoubtedly relieve the poor laborers from the forced subjection to the squire and parson. All legislation that extends the principle of self-government must have a tendency towards liberty. The justification for the acceptance of any legislation is considered to be in harmony with the will of the nation and the general good of society. Of course it is not contended that this is a perfect test; but the question arises, Can a better one be produced? It is true that through the will of the majority unjust laws exist, and to remedy this evil true education and the fostering of a sense of justice, based upon mental freedom, are necessary. Of two evils it is better to choose the lesser; therefore, I prefer to accept the decision of an enlightened majority, rather than to incur the risks of chaotic attempts to enforce obedience to individual opinions. If such a decision is wrong, our duty is to wisely use the means we have to set it right. Where does one man obtain the right, even if he had the power, to over-ride or despise the good of all? Some people fail to distinguish between that agreement which is the result of authority and that authority which is the result of agreement. The one means despotism, the other freedom.

It seems obvious that society can do for the individual much that he cannot do for himself, and I fail to see any slavery in his combining with others to obtain that which is beneficial to all. Self-sacrifice may sometimes be necessary, but all sacrifice is not injustice, and there is nothing unjust if each member of the community is free to participate in the benefits conferred on the community. To dispute this position, a man must disclaim, as some men do, social obligations and civic duties, which are the qualification of citizenship. Hence we meet with persons who are opposed to Free Libraries and Free Schools. But, surely, no observer can fail to appreciate the difference between a pandemonium and a paradise, and that is the difference which exists between an ignorant and a vicious society and one of intelligence and refinement. There can be no injustice in compelling the misanthropical or the selfish man to contribute to such social requirements as are necessary for the progress and happiness of all. Dispelling ignorance and establishing knowledge must be a direct benefit to ourselves as well as to our neighbors. It is a grave error to overlook, even from a selfish standpoint, the fact that it concerns us that our neighbors should be as intelligent as ourselves, inasmuch as our peace and happiness depend upon our surroundings. No man can successfully fight life's battle in a state of isolation; he is bound to be the recipient of services from others, and, therefore, in return he should do his best to improve that society from which he receives help.

To sum up, I believe in the axiom of the grand old Romans: "The welfare of the people is the supreme law." To secure this the best kind of government is necessary; and our duty is to do our utmost individually to place in power those only who will give effect to the highest aspirations of an intelligent and cultivated people. It is sound education, personal discipline, and persistent study that will enable us to solve the social problems that now confront us. Let us avoid all extremes, and with the aid of reason strive to discover the truth, remembering, in the words of Cowper,

He is the free man whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides.

CHARLES WATTS.

Full of his Subject.

It was at a late quarterly meeting of Seventh-day Baptist churches in Wisconsin that two ministers were to present papers on the same day, and, the question of precedence having arisen, Mr. A. sprang to his feet and said:—

"I think Brother B. ought to have the best place on the program; he is an older man than I am, and, besides, he is full of his subject."

When the audience remembered that Brother B.'s subject was "The Devil" a cheerful smile seemed to beam around the church.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

A FRAGMENT.

"I believe in . . . the forgiveness of sins."—APOSTLES' CREED.

"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—MARK xvi. 16.

"For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."—ACTS iv. 12.

CHRISTIANS, do you really believe this doctrine of "Forgiveness of sins"? Will it stand—as so vital a doctrine should and must—the test of your reason? Does it satisfy your sense of eternal justice? Take the following simple illustration, and if, after calmly considering it, your faith permits you to accept the doctrine, then permit me to congratulate you upon the strength of your faith, and—the weakness of your reason:—

TIME: About nine years ago. PLACE: A town in Yorkshire, England.

Dramatis Personæ: A navy, his wife—soon to become a mother—and two little children.

The man could out-work, out-fight, and out-drink any two men in his district. He had been brought up a Christian—by which we mean a Sunday-school or church attendant—but was a little out of practice, although he would have knocked any one down who called him an Infidel.

The woman, five years before, had been a pretty, simple, English maiden; had also been brought up a Christian—was also deficient in practice.

The husband, who earned the good wages of his class, seldom ill-used his wife—save when he was drunk. Seldom got drunk more than *twice* a week.

The woman, as before said, had been what is called a Christian; but when you have kept house and "fed dog" for five years on "fifteen bob" a week; when you have received 520 beatings; when, in the weary night watches, your cry for mercy—mercy from God and from man—has continually ascended on the night air, and there has been no answer, no mercy—why, then, Christianity *fades* a little.

The woman's God was deaf; *she no longer believed.*

One cold winter night, while patiently awaiting her lord and master and the caresses of her lord and master's boots, one of her little ones nigh scalded herself to death.

The frantic mother screams to a neighbor—then runs out in the darkness and the cold, terror-stricken, to look for a doctor. Suddenly she stops and thinks. She has no money, and, perhaps, the doctor would not come unless he were first paid. Her husband has money; it is pay night. He is drinking with his friends; she will go to him and entreat him. There is danger in this. Once before—once only—when the children were starving, she had dared to go where he caroused. *Then* he had said, simply: "Lass, if tha comes here agin, I will kill tha." He was a man of his word. "What daunts a *mother's* heart? She reached the den. One moment in panting dread. She hesitates. Shall she pray? Pray! She has prayed; this woman, after each of her five hundred beatings, and—*God never saved her from one of them.*

She goes quickly in. The man sees her at once. There is murder in his eyes. His mates fall aside, he walks to meet the woman. She, stricken with sudden panic, is dumb. Her husband, father of her bairns, faces her, says only:

"I towed tha—dang tha!"

Then just one blow; once or twice he lifts his heavy wooden clogs!

Mother and unborn babe—Dead!

The murderer is arrested, tried, and convicted, cast for death.

The prison chaplain converts him. This murderer repents—believes. He says so. His sins are forgiven—the chaplain says so—the Bible says so.

He that believeth is saved.

The murderer is hung; but his soul goes soaring to heaven, there to meet his murdered wife and child. Once more united are father, mother, and child.

Wait! we mistake; we have forgotten something. The woman *disbelieved*. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Therefore, though the *believing*, drunken wife-beating murderer soars to the abodes of bliss, the *unbelieving*, loving, tender wife and mother goes down—down to hell. There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

'Tis a beautiful doctrine, dear Christian friends—you are welcome to it. 'Tis a comforting doctrine this, that blesses believing vice, that curses unbelieving virtue.

Ivo.

CAN THEY BE MISTAKEN?

ON several occasions, in the past few years, we have expressed our fears that the good ministers may be mistaken in regard to their "calling and election" to preach the gospel. We have observed that a "call" to preach is heeded in proportion to the pay attached to the "call." It is quite evident that "calls" with coupons attached do not come from the Lord. His command to go forth and preach, explicitly ignored a money consideration. His gospel was one of humility and meekness. That is not the gospel of to-day. The minister of to-day expects to be paid and pampered and richly robed. His "Master" didn't wear store clothes. He was frequently "an hungered," and had no place to lay his head.

It would be a frightful circumstance if the good ministers are mistaken about their missions coming from the Lord. If they are preaching on their own hook, to use an original phrase, then we can accept or reject their doctrine without offence to God. If he is not responsible for the doctrines they preach (and we don't see how he can be, in view of their conflicting and contradictory character), we are not committing the unpardonable sin when we decline to worship them and accept them as our moral guides. If the minister is not ordained by God himself, then he is only a man with an easy job and in false colors. He is of the earth earthy.

We have long had harrowing doubts in regard to the mission of the ministers. If they are really the messengers of God, to offend them or disobey their injunctions would be sin of almost inconceivable enormity. But if they are mistaken in regard to their credentials coming from "on high"; if the trade of minister, the "profession" called clerical, and dubbed "divine" and "reverend," originates with *man*, why, then, we must look upon them as men laboring under a grave delusion, entitling them to the protecting care of our State asylums for people who are off their base, or as adroit deceivers and hypocrites, preying upon the affections and superstitions, upon the hopes and fears, of the honest but ill-informed masses of our people.

In any event, the good minister has a hard problem for his conscience to solve, and we have great pity and charity for him.

If he has a suspicion that he is *not* "ordained of God," then his midnight hours are haunted by the haggard spectres that a guilty conscience always harrows up. These crouch at him in his bed-chamber, move about in their naked bones in the uncertain light, glare upon him with eyeless sockets, point at him with bony fingers, and hiss through lipless rows of chattering teeth: "Hypocrite! hypocrite! hypocrite!" O horror of horrors! what a life the "reverend divine" leads who has a well-grounded conviction, or even a strong suspicion, that his ministerial business is but a trade devised by man, and that God has nothing to do with it!

And, on the other hand, his dreadful situation is equally unendurable if he fully *believes* his mission is from God, and that he is doing God's work, for he feels that this very *belief*, in the total absence of reason or evidence or common sense to sustain it, is proof positive of hallucination or unsoundness of mind, and he does not know what moment the dementia may assume a murderous type and drive him to suicide or to the murder of his wife and children, or both! Only think of this! Only think of the hard situation of our "moral guides," ye hard-hearted unbelievers, and then blame us, if you can, for sympathising with them, for standing by them and defending them from the wiles of unprincipled kitchen girls and all other irreverent and wicked people.—*Ironclad Age*.

LONDON SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION. (Finsbury Division.)

TO THE ELECTORS OF FINSBURY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Having been requested to stand for the London School Board by a considerable section of voters in your division, and having promised to go to the poll as an independent candidate, I take an early opportunity of publicly stating my views for your consideration.

The speciality of my candidature is Secular Education. This does not mean that children should be brought up as Secularists or unbelievers in any particular form of religion, but simply that no kind of religious teaching should be given in schools which are maintained by rates and taxes levied on all classes of the community. The government of a free country should not meddle with opinions; it is bound in equity to hold aloof from the speculative differences of individual citizens. Nothing should be taught in public schools but what all regard as *knowledge*, and which can be imparted to the children without hesitation or disagreement. It is a wicked policy to make the school-room the battle-ground of rival creeds and systems.

Both the Church party and the so-called Progressives are working against the great principle of religious equality. Each section is endeavoring to establish its special form of religious instruction in the schools. I am opposed to both sides in this acrimonious quarrel, and I should vote for the absolute exclusion of theology, including Bible-reading, from all the Board Schools in the metropolis.

I am in favor of concentrating the whole intelligence and energy of the Board on the problem of secular education; leaving the vexed and intricate business of religious education to be transacted by the parents themselves, in conjunction with the ministers into whose hands they choose to entrust the minds of their children.

While in favor of economy, I should approach the question of expenditure in no cheeseparing spirit, as I regard the education of children as the best of national investments.

My voice and vote would be used to procure the best possible education for all the children, with a due regard to their physical training. I am in favor of honest pay and reasonable work for the teachers, gymnasia and swimming-baths, Evening Continuation Classes, and all other means of utilising the schools for the advantage of the people.

As a life-long supporter of Trade Unionism, I am, of course, in favor of the Trade Union rate of wages, and hours of work, being extended to the Board's employees; and, whenever possible, I think the Board should be the direct employer of labor.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE HEBREW TONGUE.

THE nebulous member of the Holy Trinity must have a penchant for mystification, or he would never have chosen such a language as the Hebrew to convey a divine revelation. Scholars are agreed that the Massoretic vowel points are a comparatively modern invention. They were rendered necessary when Hebrew became a dead language.* The original being without vowel points, only tradition and the context could supply the meaning. In some cases the Massoretos purposely supplied wrong vowels. Thus to the word יְהוָה (Jahveh), which it was a sin to pronounce, they supplied the vowel points of אֲדֹנָי (Adonai), or of אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), as in Obadiah i. 1, Hab. iii. 19. Probably, too, they turned melek (a sheik or king) into Moloch (a false god) by putting the vowel points for בֹּשֶׁת (bosheth = shame), as they substituted Ishbosheth (2 Sam. ii. 8) for Ishbaal (1 Chron. viii. 13), and Mephibosheth (2 Sam. iv. 4) for Meribbaal (1 Chron. ix. 40). In at least ten places they put vowels without any consonants at all, † probably because

* It is evident from Nehemiah viii. 8 that even at that time the people could not read and understand the law for themselves; yet the vowel points are not pretended to have been invented till hundreds of years afterwards.

† Judges xx. 13; Ruth iii. 5, 17; 2 Sam. viii. 3, xvi. 23, xviii. 20; 2 Kings xix. 31, 37; Jeremiah xxxi. 38, 1. 29.

the consonants were counted. This may explain why they put נ above נִשָּׂה in Judges xviii. 30, turning Moses into Manasseh, to take away the evidence that the descendants of Moses were idolaters. Then the Hebrew characters are easily mistaken in MSS. ך is much like ך, ך like ך, and ך may easily be taken for ך, or ך for ך. And these characters are totally different from those that must have been used in the days of Moses, or even in those of Solomon and the prophets. Indeed, the letters on the Maccabean coins are in Samaritan, not Hebrew characters. Yet the Samaritan Pentateuch is considered as of no authority. In our MSS., none of which are dated earlier than the tenth century after Christ, there are already numerous various readings, or rather passages, *written* in one way, but marked to be *read* in another—the former called כְּתִיב (Chetib), and the latter קְרִי (Keri). In Jeremiah alone there are no fewer than 140 marginal readings, often necessary to make sense, though Mr. Bellamy held that a translation should be made from the inspired Chetib text only. Nor are different readings immaterial. A common source of error is confusing the pronoun לו (lu) with the negation לו (lo). Thus King James's translators rendered Isaiah ix. 3, "Thou hast multiplied the nation and *not* increased the joy," while the Revisers read, "Thou hast increased their joy." A revelation which gives us the option of the affirmative or the negative proves its divinity by its elasticity.

LUCIANUS.

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. Nehemiah Boynton, in a sermon reported at length in the *Christian Commonwealth*, tells of a "London agitator" speaking to an audience of 5,000 working people, when a Socialist called for "Three cheers for the Man of Nazareth," and the thousands "made the welkin ring" in reply. Now we very much doubt the truth of this story. What was the name of the agitator, and where and when was the meeting held? These are questions that ought to be answered. For our part, we do not believe that any great meeting of *bona fide* working people in London would give three cheers for Jesus Christ.

Dr. James Legge, the well-known missionary and Chinese scholar, has been interviewed by a religious journal *apropos* of the trouble in Corea. The worthy Doctor allowed that the moral standard of Confucianism was a very high one. "You might read all the Confucian books from beginning to end," he said, "in the presence of the most delicate lady without needing to omit a word." How different from the Bible, with its lustful stories and brutal expressions! Dr. Legge, however, is perfectly satisfied that the Bible is inspired, while the Confucian books are not. Well, there is no accounting for taste—or its absence.

Dr. Legge told his interviewer that some of the Chinese writings are four thousand years old. The historical record goes back "positively to the eighth century B.C., probably to very nearly 3,000 B.C." What then becomes of the Bible chronology, if Chinese history goes back to the supposed days of Adam?

Mr. T. Pollard, continuing, in *Secular Thought*, his account of his experience with missionaries and the heathen, says: "I have seen a dozen natives fitting on a selection of clothes which they had secured from a missionary. One man stalked around with nothing to hide his skin but a hat; another put on the pants—they occupied all his attention in holding them up till he was tired of the job; while another tried the boots on, but quickly took them off. They seemed to think it wonderful the Pahkeah (white man or missionary) should want to wear all these clothes at once. They receive Christianity in about the same way; a very little of it can be spread over a whole tribe of these people."

Mr. Pollard says that in the South Sea Islands a good deal of specie is left by seamen, and it always eventually finds its way into the hands of the missionaries, some of whom combine a deal of secular trade with their sky pilotage. One instance must suffice: "Our ship revisited one of the islands where we had touched about a year before. The native ladies had, on the former occasion, entertained the men with their best fruits, etc., and there had been no question of payment. The missionaries, however, had, in the meantime, settled on the island, and, as a result, the first smiling advances of the gentle ones were accompanied by a demand for money. 'Half-a-crown!' said an astonished sailor, 'why, what do you want money for?' 'Me not want money.

Missionary say we must get it for him.' 'For the missionary! Why, what does he do with it?' 'Oh, he give it all to the Lord.' And so Jack had to pay in future; but whether the Lord got the money or not the reader can judge as well as Jack. I am inclined to think it went into the private bank account of the missionary; and that, 'if Christ Came to the Missionary Stations in the Pacific,' he would find as big an opening for work in some of them as in Chicago."

Mr. Aked, the popular Christian preacher of Liverpool, denounces the South African Baptists for accepting a gift of 9,000 acres of land in the Matabele region. He hopes the "manhood of the Baptists"—wherever that may be—will "fling back with disdain and horror the price of human blood." We thoroughly agree with Mr. Aked, but then, to be consistent, he should equally denounce the chosen people of Jehovah for butchering and dispossessing the Canaanites. Indeed, the *Christian Commonwealth* would like to know what answer he could give if "some infidel" were to tackle him on the subject.

By the way, the *Christian Commonwealth* has dropped its "Objections to Christianity" correspondence. Nothing sillier than this enterprise ever came under our notice.

Good old Boers! They look very old-fashioned, but they are the real Bible Christians after all! Still, there are signs that even the Boers are learning to water Christianity down when necessary. The Transvaal Volksraad has agreed to renew the fire insurance of the Government buildings, valued at £180,000. But the majority was only one vote above the minority, who held insurance to be sinful.

The bumptious young Emperor of Germany has again avowed his claim to right divine to do just as he pleases. For the Prussian nobles to be in opposition to their king, he declared, was a monstrosity, and, of course, he finds a subservient press to back up his monstrous claim.

In England the right divine to govern wrong has never recovered from the fall of an axe outside Whitehall in 1649. But even in our own day the doctrine has been advocated, not only by the Jacobite members of the White Rose League, but also by the Rev. Dr. F. H. Laing, in a book entitled *Whence do Monarchs Derive their Title to Rule?* Certainly they do not usually get it from their subjects.

Cardinal Vaughan, who dedicated England to St. Peter, has been laying down the terms of Christian Reunion. The Catholic Church cannot alter a jot of its constitution, but might compromise on non-essentials. The differences among Anglicans give him strong hopes that the day will come when the authority of the Pope will be recognised. If he lives till he sees it, his life would be a good investment for an annuity.

The Catholic *Weekly Register* notices that prayers for the dead are becoming more common in the Church of England, and that the decline of belief in hell is increasing the belief in purgatory. Hell brought the priests power, but purgatory brings them pence; and in these days they have to look to the latter to ensure the former.

Canon Noyes swears that Catholics don't teach the impeccability of the Pope; but the Abbé Duchesne, who is a member of the Institute of France and Professor of Church History in Paris, writes of French ecclesiastical seminaries that "the theological direction is in the hands of persons too much swayed by the suggestions of sentiment, not to say the gusts of passion. We have a seminary," he goes on to remark, "in which the doctrine of the impeccability of the Pope is currently taught. Nobody dares to raise his voice against this absurd doctrine."

In Italy, where street preachers are comparatively common, a few years ago one of them collected a crowd at a corner and began to harangue it on mortal sin. Suddenly a sort of Punch and Judy man, with his *polichinelle*, took up his place hard by, and enticed the crowd away from the preacher. The good pastor first appealed to the piety of his hearers, but, seeing that appeals were in vain, resorted to a more drastic method, and, raising his crucifix aloft, cried aloud, "Brethren, behold the true Polichinelle!"

Everywhere we find religion becoming more and more of an entertainment. Music has more attention than prayer, and decoration than devotion. This is all very well, but what must the Apostles think of it?

The Ritualist *Church Times* wants to know why the use of incense is not more common when it is so eminently scriptural. Does not Malachi say, "In every place incense shall be offered"? Did not Zacharias hear of the Incarnation while offering incense, and does not the Apocalypse tell us

that the angels offer incense? Well, we offer the *C. T.* our explanation: Incense offerings are a survival from the time when cattle were slaughtered at the altar, and a counter perfume had to be set up in order that the Lord might smell a sweet savor.

A writer in the *Evangelische Botschafter*, Stuttgart, is of the opinion that the State Church of Germany has left the orthodox faith; and he prophesies that the time is near when those who really believe in Christ will be forced to form free congregations.

"Only people," he says, "who are blinded by outward appearances can deny that Christianity—Evangelical Christianity—is not advancing, but declining. Unbelief is increasing rapidly among all classes, and to be silent about this fact, or to deny it, can only aggravate the evil. What the Socialists preach without shame and fear is only what has been quietly going on for a long time among classes which are altogether opposed to Socialism. The lack of religion among the Socialists is the natural harvest of unbelieving science; and, while the people of the cities fearlessly exhibit their unbelief, the country-folk hide it by an outward show of adherence to the Churches."

The *British Weekly*, writing on "Evolution and Immortality," says that "even in strictly orthodox circles Christian folk have begun to reconcile themselves to the prospect of extinction at death. They think that this is the inference to be drawn from current theories of evolution, and they are making a pathetic struggle to be content, and to believe that they still have Christ, though they have no future." "But," says the *British Weekly*, "if the people of Christ are not alive, then He has perished. The power that evolved Him deceived Him, and is, therefore, a malignant power."

Mr. James Payn, in his *Gleams of Memory*, says he has never met with orthodoxy in any man of letters, even though nominally connected with an established sect. "Their doubts," he says, "are more than historic doubts. Their difficulty is to believe that omnipotence and benevolence can permit the outrageous crimes and cruelties that go on every day in the world."

Harvest thanksgivings are now in order; but do the thanksgivers reflect what the state of the harvest would be if left to divine providence, without the results of human experience, labor, forethought, and skill spent upon it? Even as it is, the harvest is not what it might be, and land, in many parts of England, is going out of cultivation, because, with every exertion of the farmer, he cannot make it pay.

A "Perplexed Essex Vicar" writes to the *Guardian* asking what he shall do about the harvest thanksgiving festival. The heavy rains have spoilt all the crops in his district. He says: "What am I to do? It seems almost a bitter mockery to ask them to thank God for a benefit which they have not, and cannot now receive." The worst of it is, the farmers see the absurdity even more clearly than the parsons.

If the curate was right who thought it sufficient if pound for pound he believed as much as his bishop, London curates should be troubled with a very small modicum of faith, since their bishop takes £10,000 yearly, and was suspected of heresy in the days when he was Master of Rugby. Now his faith is supposed to have grown, but certainly his works have not grown with it.

£10,000 annually is a trifling sum for such a task as over-seeing the souls of London. Satan himself would not do it at the price. But as the job is too big for any man, we do not wonder that the Rev. M. Davies coolly proposed that the sum should be divided among ten men of God, each of whom would find scope for all his energies in looking after a tithe of the population of the city of cities.

The last Bishop of London who died left only a trifle of £72,000 behind him. Christ said it was hard for a rich man to get to heaven, but probably Bishop Jackson did not consider himself rich save in grace and goodness.

An exchange tells it this way: "The priest saves the man who helps support him, and damns the man who does not. The doctrine of the Church is, 'God will damn the man who will not pay the priest.'" The editor of that sheet is evidently beyond the saving grace of the Holy Ghost.

Auguste Comte had a very poor opinion of Jesus Christ. In his *Positive Polity* he calls Saint Paul the real founder of Christianity, and places him in the Positivist calendar. In one of his private letters, published since his death, he speaks of Jesus Christ as "that charlatan." Comte predicted that the name of Christ would be more and more invoked by political sentimentalists and the opponents of

property. And his prediction is being realised, for, according to the *Christian World*, "not only Evangelical preachers, but Hyde Park orators, revolutionists, Socialists, and Anarchists, now invoke that name."

Jesus Christ was on the road for three years. Then the "enemy" got him nailed up. General Booth is more fortunate. He has been at the game for a whole generation, and when he goes to a place, after riding first-class, the band plays "See the conquering hero comes!"

What will not religious journals do for money. Opening the *Christian Leader* we began to read a leaded article on "The History of a Scar," and after a while we found it was really an advertisement of Mother Siegel's Syrup!

John McNeill said to a Melbourne audience, "I could laugh at the ludicrous way the devil is playing all his old tricks on you, and pulling you down to the swine—if it did not wring my heart to see it." John doesn't include himself in the devil's victims. "I'm all right, don't ye know?"

Credulity, thy name is—Sarah G. Stock. This lady writes about a Hindu who was bitten by a poisonous reptile. Some of his companions had been made Christians by the missionaries. They proposed that all should bow down before the Christian god, who had power over poison. Then one of them read a passage from the New Testament and prayed. Suddenly the Hindu who had the snake bite got well, and was afterwards baptised! All this is gravely told in the *Christian Herald*. Such are the yarns with which the missionaries extract cash from the pockets of simple souls in Great Britain. They don't get much from Ireland. Ireland sends her subscriptions to the old miracle-man at Rome.

Mr. William Vanderbilt has settled £2,000,000 on his wife. Both of them are devoted followers of the "Master" who said "Woe unto you rich."

Mr. George Muller, of the famous Orphanage, says in his annual report that "even avowed infidels have been stopped in their downward course to perdition, by seeing how times without number God had appeared on my behalf simply in answer to prayer." It would, of course, be impolite to call Mr. George Muller a name that begins with the letter that finishes "hell"; but would it be so impolite to ask him for the name and address of (say) one of those "avowed infidels"?

The question, "Is Suicide a Sin?" propounded by the *New York World* to Colonel Ingersoll, is exciting a lively controversy in its columns. The orthodox opponents of the Colonel are distinguished by the strength of their epithets. "Colossal impudence and outrageous audacity of pernicious diabolical advice," says W. Lane O'Neill. Professor Stillman F. Kneeland declares that no suicides are Christians, though the majority die speaking of God. H. J. Lathan declares that God will hold Ingersoll responsible for all the lives that may be taken under his advice. He evidently thinks, poor man, that people will rush out of life after reading the pamphlet. Some of the letters are more worthy reading. One, for instance, from a writer who thinks all cranks and dampfools should be encouraged to suicide for the benefit of posterity, is humorous. Another, from a woman who describes herself as twenty-three, and a "sad, lonely unfortunate," and confesses she has tried to commit suicide and failed from lack of courage, sounds the very depths of pathos. Some blame the *World* for starting the discussion, but the pulpits have taken it up, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science has taken a day to discuss it, so there are evidently some who think there may be more mischief in covering up ugly facts than in facing them.

The *Light of Truth* is an American spiritist journal, which publishes some able articles by Mr. W. E. Coleman, directed against "Reincarnation," which he opposes from the scientific standpoint of its being incompatible with the facts of heredity. The same paper, however, publishes a pretended communication from "Ralph Waldo Emerson" on "The Christ Principle," which he is made to declare "is being presented to the world through Modern Spiritualism." How such utter twaddle, with not even the distinctive note of a bad imitation of Emerson, could be credited by anyone familiar with his writings is a wonder.

The Society for Sly-kick Research recently discovered a mejum who was able to raise a table from the ground while his hands were on the top. He had a strong, though thin, bar of steel under his culls.

The Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association call on working men to boycott the papers that issue Sunday editions. As a matter of fact, newsvendors are not obliged to sell them, and some allow this business to pass into other

hands. In London Sunday papers are often supplied by old men or lads who have no shops or trade on other days.

A French priest had a well-stocked little garden, which he was fond of superintending. He was surprised to find that a certain special kind of cabbage disappeared much faster than even his own good appetite warranted. He determined to watch, and next morning discovered three of his most pious parishioners, who attended church every morning and sat closest to his pulpit, quietly sharing with him the blessings of this world. He stood for a moment or two perfectly lost in amazement; then his anger gave way, and he roared out to them in a stentorian voice: "I cannot imagine what Christ can have been thinking of when he died for such scoundrels as you!"

We have heard of a pious person who, having been sent a copy of the *Freethinker*, tore it up with the appropriate remark: "I'll show them how to cast their pearls before swine."

The *Bible Society Record*, of New York, publishes, on the authority of the *Epworth Herald*, which gives the authority of an unknown late Dr. Tyng, a nice little story of "a cold-hearted English Atheist" who was converted within three weeks by his dying wife giving him a Bible, a work with which, apparently, he was previously unacquainted. The story has all the well-known characteristics of the anecdotes specially manufactured for use in the pulpit.

Some people wonder why the legends of Paine and Voltaire's death-beds crop up so frequently, although they have been so often exposed. The reason is that they find place in volumes of anecdotes, purposely got up for ministerial use. The men of God find them there, and, of course, are often unaware of their refutation. Some of these stories are deliberate manufactures, and even, we grieve to say, the work of Infidels, bent on seeing how far Christians can be hoaxed.

At Mexico they have an altar to Our Lady of Guadalupe; the railings around are of solid silver, weighing twenty-six tons. This amount of silver spent on altar decoration, with the people growing up in ignorance, must be the very thing for Our Lady. It may remind her of the good old times.

Albert S. Ashmead, M.D., sends to the New York *Sun* a letter on "Death in the Communion Cup." He says: "The last time I knelt at the Communion altar of the Episcopal Church there knelt at one side of me a patient whom I knew, as I was treating him at the time, to be a syphilitic; his mouth had mucous patches, which make the disease especially contagious. This person took the cup before it came to me. Of course, I let the cup pass."

Dr. Ashmead continues: "At another time the person next to me, but following me in the use of the cup, was also a patient of mine, in an advanced stage of tuberculosis. The mouth of this person was in a condition dangerous to his neighbor. Of course, no man who is not a complete survival of the Middle Ages can assert that, under these circumstances, a man (if he knew) should apply his lips to a probably dangerously contaminated cup, trusting in the protection of the Lord, who has allowed hundreds, a hundred times, to perish in burning or earth-shaken churches, while they were in the very act of worshipping him."

The Parisienne members of the Salvation Army cannot stand the hideous blue, scuttle-shaped, kiss-me-not atrocities that serve as headgear to Salvation Sally on this side of the Channel. They wear round, white straw hats with slightly upturned brims, exposing their profiles and back hair.

The *Church Times* is much disgusted at the manifesto of the Bible Education Union on the coming London School Board election. It speaks of its affected zeal for the Christian religion while playing into the hands of Mr. Lyulph Stanley in antagonism to the Diggleite clerical majority. Between them the electors are likely to get plenty of religious education before November.

In reference to the Archbishop of York's recent utterance, that he has only now discovered that licenses for the re-marriage of divorced persons have been granted in the diocese of York, and that they will be issued no further, the *Church Times* says: "It strikes us as not a little strange that the Bishops know so little of what is done in their names, and with their apparent sanction, by their legal officials."

The new concern of the Church against re-marriage of divorced persons has been much stimulated by the taunts of Catholic papers, that in this matter the Anglican Church does not follow the plain law of Christ. It appears, however, that, according to the *New York Independent*, the Roman Bishop, Dr. Marty, recently officiated at the re-marriage of a divorced woman at Sioux Falls, S.P. He

explained that the lady had not been baptised when first married, so that her first marriage was no true marriage at all. Plain people will think the explanation a deal worse than the act. At any rate, when a divorced person wishes re-marriage in the Catholic Church, the matter becomes easy on the plea of having been unbaptised at the time of the prior marriage.

Mr. William White writes to the *Church Times*, wanting to know, if the record of the death of Moses in the Pentateuch is a later insertion, why the references to the kings of Israel in Genesis xxxvi. 31 should not be an insertion also, and not, as Father Ignatius says, a prophecy. There is, however, another question, put by Lucianus: "Are not these passages both evidences of the late date of the whole document?"

The clerical journals have been making much fuss over a French orphanage that was presided over by M. Robin, the Positivist, who, it is said, drew up a small treatise on Malthusianism for the use of the children. Asked what religious education they received, M. Robin replied, "Not the slightest. I belong to the Positivist school; I consider that the idea of God is a product of the imagination, without any scientific foundation, which offers no practical utility, and which, on the contrary, as history shows, has been the cause of almost all men's evils." Is it not horrible? M. Robin has been dismissed from the orphanage; but the clerical party cannot be expected to recover from his impiety until after the elections.

The *Chicago Tribune* gives the following: "Hostess (who does not know him very well)—'Professor, there is no clergyman present. I shall have to ask you to say grace.' Professor (Infidel of long standing)—'No clergyman? Then let us return thanks in silence.'" This is a hash of an old story told of Lamb, who, asked to say grace, inquired if any clergyman was present, and, on being answered in the negative, said fervently, "Thank God!"

At Alton, in Hampshire, the townspeople were much disgusted at the refusal on the part of the vicar to allow the bells at a popular wedding, and, as a consequence, the ringers retaliated last Sunday, and left the vicar to ring by himself a solitary bell previous to the service.

The Abbé Favier, a priest at Lyons, has been sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for fraud. He worked the oracle under pretext of religion and charity.

The negroes of Atlanta have been having a pitched battle. A negro clergyman, named Gaston, is said to have demoralised about one hundred of them, and a negro politician told them they had been deluded. Gaston and his friends resented this, and a pitched battle ensued, many shots being fired, and several of the combatants being seriously injured.

"He doeth all things well." West America has suffered from drought and forest fires, while Texas has suffered from incessant rain and floods. Providence seems to have adequate resources, but they are dealt out badly. A human committee of six would provide a better distribution of weather.

Freethinkers should all be reading Ingersoll's new pamphlet, "Is Suicide a Sin?" especially as it includes the reply of a Roman Catholic cardinal. The subject, of course, is rather melancholy, but it is one that must be faced in a civilisation like ours, where the maladies of the mind are becoming more acute with the growing complexity of social life and the difficulty of social relationships. Closing one's eyes to unpleasant facts is no sign of wisdom; it is merely an imitation of the folly of the ostrich.

Ingersoll argues that suicide is in some cases justifiable. A man suffering from a malignant, incurable disease has a right to end his misery. A man who has brought irretrievable ruin upon those near and dear to him is none the worse if he executes justice upon himself and rids the world of his presence. Nor does this conclude the list of justifiable suicides. Take, for instance, the following case from America.

During the recent forest fires a farmer went from home on business. Hearing of the conflagration, he galloped back, only to find his homestead a blackened ruin. The savings of a lifetime were all gone, and his dear ones were heaps of ashes. He gathered together the burnt remains of his wife, his daughters, his son-in-law, and his grandchild; and then, in a moment of love-prompted despair, drew his revolver and deliberately fired a bullet into his own brain.

Who shall say that the old farmer sinned? Who shall say that he was bound to drag on a life of misery, with the picture of that awful tragedy ever before his eyes? Who shall say that God—if such a being exist—will punish a man who shared the fate of those he loved?

SPECIAL NOTICE.

WE learn by telegram that, in consequence of the cessation of the Isle of Man afternoon steamers, Mr. Foote's article, together with his paragraphs and items of correspondence, cannot arrive until after we go to press. They will accordingly appear in our next issue.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 16, Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool:—11, "Christian Socialism"; 3, "Lord Salisbury on Evolution, Design, and God"; 7, "Is Immortality a Blessing?"

September 30, Plymouth.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—Sept. 16, Hall of Science; 22 and 23, Sheffield; 28, York; 30, Dundee. October 3, 4, and 5, Aberdeen; 7, Edinburgh; 14, Glasgow; 21, Bradford; 28, Hall of Science, London. November 4, Hall of Science; 11, Hall of Science, London; 18, Liverpool. December 2, Newcastle-on-Tyne (Sunday Society); 9, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

HASTINGS.—E. H. Croucher, Marine Parade, supplies the *Freethinker*.

MANCHESTER SECRETARY.—Your notices are invariably late. If not here by Tuesday morning, they will not appear.

W. CABELL.—Thanks for your regard for strict accuracy. If you re-read the extract from Mr. Symes, you will find that he is dealing with a supposition, not as to what would actually occur before a coroner's jury.

J. HD.—(1) Charles Reade's *Cloister and the Hearth* is a great book, but the author erred in making Colonna say that "burning men's bodies for the opinions of their souls" was a "purely Pagan custom" borrowed by Christianity. As a matter of historical fact, burning to death for "false" opinion was introduced under the first Christian emperor, Constantine. Christianity is the only creed we know of that deliberately incorporated burning alive into its jurisprudence. (2) Both the works you refer to will be published as soon as Messrs. Foote and Wheeler have found time to complete them. (3) Mr. Foote is in very good health at present.

G. W. B.—Sorry to see the gentleman is dabbling in such turbid waters.

J. G. BERTRAM.—The envelope not being marked "Lecture Notice," your letter was sent on to Mr. Foote in Scotland, and your announcement could not therefore appear in last week's *Freethinker*. Branch secretaries should please note this direction.

H. JONES.—We have nothing to do with your reason for asking the questions, nor do we wish to hear of the person you mention.

J. STEWART.—The Bible does not say that bastards shall not enter heaven; it says they shall not enter the congregation of the Lord. See Deut. xxiii. 2. You will find our *Bible Handbook* very useful for such references.

J. CHILD.—Answering your letter hundreds of miles from London and all books of reference, we cannot tell you the situation of the Registrar's office in Bethnal Green; but you can easily ascertain it if you make inquiries. Marriage at the Registrar's office is perfectly legal, exactly as in a licensed place of worship, only there is no religious ceremony. A ring is usual, but is not requisite. You will need two witnesses at the ceremony, and you must give three weeks' notice. They will give you any further information you require at the Registrar's office.

VERAX.—Beneath contempt. The only possible answer would be a thrashing.

L. LEVINE.—Your American papers are very welcome. Accept our compliments and thanks.

R. O. SMITH, treasurer London Secular Federation, acknowledges:—*Donations*: Mr. S. Munns, £3 11s.; D. Davies, £1 1s.; W. Hunt, 10s. *Collections*: Finsbury Park, 9s.; Hall of Science, £1 17s. 1d.; Camberwell Branch, 7s. 6d.; Victoria Park, 3s. 6d.; East London Branch, 4s. 5d.; Finsbury Branch, 5s.

PLINY.—Your letter is sent on to Mr. Foote. What you refer to need give us no concern.

W. H. S.—It should be sufficient to challenge the person who makes the calumny on Mrs. Besant to prove it. It is only another proof of what bigoted persons will say.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Thanks for joke. We mentioned the articles when they appeared in the *Weekly Times and Echo*, but the book has not been sent to us for review.

J. WOOD.—Wood Green reports ten new members, four being ladies. Pleased to hear of your successful campaign at Southend, which we hope will lead to some local effort.

A. A. WATTS.—So far from it being correct that the wine made at Cana was unfermented, the word translated "well drunk" (John ii. 10) implies drunkenness in every other case where it is used—viz., Matt. xxiv. 49; Acts ii. 15; 1 Cor. xi. 21; 1 Thess. v. 7; Rev. xvii. 2 and 6.

E. H. DAILY.—Cuttings received with thanks.

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—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Liberator—Western Figaro—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—La Verité—Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Freedom—Fur Unsere Jugend—Crescent—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—Echo—Zoophilist—New York World Monthly—New York Sun—The New Commonwealth—Dominica Guardian—Islamic World—Liver—Progress—Eastern Free Press—World's Advance Thought—Universal Republic—Labor Partnership—Open Court—Freethinker's Magazine—Bulletin Mensuel de la Fédération des Libres Penseurs—De Dageraad—Literary Digest—Westminster Gazette—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Daily Chronicle—Chatham and Rochester News.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, 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.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE re-visits Liverpool this Sunday, lecturing three times in the Oddfellows' Hall. The Branch has issued large posters, and, with fine weather, Mr. Foote should have good audiences. Freethinkers should take their Christian friends, if possible, as all the subjects are likely to be interesting to outsiders.

Last Sunday evening a capital audience assembled at the Hall of Science, London, to hear Mr. Watts's reply to Mr. Gladstone's article in the *Nineteenth Century* upon the "Atonement." Many strangers were present, and the applause was frequent and enthusiastic. The weakness of Mr. Gladstone's position was clearly shown, and the absurdity and inutility of the alleged "Atonement" were forcibly indicated.

Mr. Watts lectures again from the same platform this Sunday evening, September 16, taking for his subject the important question: "Why Should we Live Moral Lives? A Secularist's Answer." As Christians assert there is no efficient motive for morality apart from their faith, it should be interesting to hear from Mr. Watts what the incentives to goodness are from a Secular standpoint.

Mr. Watts's "Address to the Electors of Finsbury" will be found in another column. Three weeks before the election for the London School Board, Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts, and others, will commence holding public meetings, when they will address the electors upon the necessity of returning to the Board exponents of real secular education. In the meantime members of Mr. Watts's Committee will canvass on his behalf and distribute suitable literature, which can be obtained at his Central Committee-room, 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Mr. James Anderson, secretary and manager of the Hall of Science Club and Institute, desires us to notify that members of the N.S.S. taking advantage of the privileges of the club should have their cards of membership with them, to be shown on request to the official of the club.

Winter Freethought lectures will be resumed at the Gladstone Club, Bermondsey; Mr. C. J. Hunt opening the season with a discourse on the Inquisition.

The Lewisham and New Cross Branch has started Sunday evening lectures on Deptford Broadway. As is usual at first, they have encountered much rowdy and unscrupulous opposition, and we hope that Freethinkers in the district will attend and support the lecturer.

A debate on "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" will take place on Clerkenwell-green on Sunday morning, at 11.30, between Mr. A. B. Moss and Mr. Samuel Hale. On the following Sunday Mr. Snell brings the course to a close, his subject being, "Under which Lord?"

Mr. G. H. Young, one of the S.D.F. School Board candidates for West Lambeth, will give an address at the Battersea Secular Hall this Sunday evening (September 16). He is in favor of secular education.

The first Freethought lecture in Heywood was given last Friday. Meetings will be held on the Market ground on Thursdays, as long as the weather permits.

The *Chatham and Rochester News* devotes items to the summer treat to the Secular school children, and also to the recent lectures of Messrs. Heaford and James.

De Dageraad is to be congratulated on having completed the Dutch translation of Mr. W. E. H. Lecky's important *History of Rationalism in Europe*. Our contemporary is known for its able translations from the English, and does not disdain to make them from our columns.

Secular Thought is reprinting Mr. Watts's "Questions for Theists." It also gives from our columns a paper by Mr. Wheeler on "Bible Translations."

The *Open Court*, of Chicago (August 30), has a paper by Moncure D. Conway, on "The Paine Club in Paris," mentioning Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Sir Robert Smith, Jeremiah Joyce, and other English Jacobins who held a Paine Club at Philadelphia House, Paris, just a century ago. Mr. Conway concludes by remarking: "Thomas Paine was elected to the French Convention as an American; he was outlawed by his native England; he was imprisoned in France for being an Englishman; and, when he returned to America, his vote was refused on the pretext that he was not an American citizen." The time may arrive when these hardships of Paine will be quoted to prove his honor as the earliest citizen of the world.

In the *Positivist Review* for September Mr. Frederic Harrison begins a series of articles on "Civil and Religious Marriage." He says: "To one plain and simple solution we must come. Whatever else is done, the State must insist on its own independent, uniform, lay act of the law, distinct from any religious rite, and not affected by any religious rite, antecedent, subsequent, or simultaneous. The State must have its own official, its own distinct ceremony, its own national register, and its own absolute record in its own keeping."

Mr. Harrison points out that it is ridiculous to pretend that this legal ceremony can be a hardship on Churchmen. They cannot deny that marriage has, in the eye of the law and for the purpose of civil society, a lay aspect, civil effects, and purely legal incidents. If they desire courts of justice to give effect to the rights and obligations of husband and wife, parent and child, they cannot complain if the State requires these lay and legal results of the *status* produced by marriage to be officially confirmed, witnessed, and recorded. It is as silly to complain of compulsory civil marriage as it would be to complain of compulsory execution by deed of a binding marriage settlement.

The author of *The Policy of the Pope* exposes, in the current *Contemporary Review*, the Catholic system of "Theological Book-keeping by Double Entry," showing that the orthodox do not scruple to employ Jesuitism in their dealings with rationalists. The writer shows how differently his articles have been treated by Catholics abroad writing for Catholics, and those in England writing for the English public; the last seeking to meet him with argument, the former one denouncing him as a blasphemer. The writer shows that there is a strong under-current of antagonism to Bibliolatry in the Catholic Church. He winds up with an application to Catholicism of a quotation from Abu Pala, the Freethinking Arabic poet, recently written upon by Mr. Wheeler:—

Its types of men are two: gifted the one with faith,
But wholly lacking reason;
In judgment rich the other, whose faith
Has vanished into air.

The *New York World* speaks out boldly on another subject besides suicide. It now starts "Our Wasted Sundays," and says the parks do not provide sufficiently for a tithe of those who want out-door recreation in New York on Sundays. It says: "In the interest alike of health, of morality, of contentment, not to mention humanity and justice, there should be a change. There should be gymnasiums, playgrounds, swimming-baths, concert-gardens, open libraries, reading-rooms, and other places for delightful,

innocent, healthful recreation, and rest on Sunday for the people who are too poor to provide these things for themselves, but whose toil for six days in the week does so much towards making the metropolis what it is." We quote the passage, for it is just as applicable to London and our other large cities as to New York.

Acting on our suggestion, the Committee of the Newcastle Branch are endeavoring to raise enough money to enable Mr. Joseph Brown to go to the country for a period of rest and recuperation. Mr. Brown has done a great deal of gratuitous work for the Freethought cause on the Tyneside, and we hope the Freethinkers of the district will now recognise his services in a practical manner. Subscriptions should be forwarded to Mr. J. G. Bartram, 17 Morley-street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Already received: A. Sturt, 2s. 6d.; T. Foreman, 2s. 6d.; R. Mitchell, 2s. 6d.; J. Easton, 1s.; J. Tullin, 2s. 6d.; J. H. Summerfield, 2s. 6d.; Friend, 1s.; W. Armstrong, 6d.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

MONTHLY Executive Meeting held at the Hall of Science August 30. The President in the chair. Present: Messrs. Charles Watts, V. Roger, R. O. Smith, E. Truelove, J. M. Wheeler, C. J. Hunt, Thornton Smith, W. Heaford, E. Johnstone, G. J. Warren, G. Ward, C. Cohen, E. Quay, H. J. Stace, C. Thomas, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received. The Organisation Committee's minutes were also confirmed, and their recommendation, that the free admission to galleries should be continued for twelve months, was adopted.

The President gave a report of the Demonstration in Hyde Park, arranged by the National League for the Abolition of the House of Lords, and called attention to the assistance rendered by members of the N.S.S. It was decided to grant £1 1s. towards the expenses of the Demonstration.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1895 was discussed, and it was resolved to ask Messrs. G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler to kindly undertake the editorship. Their consent having been obtained, the business arrangements were remitted to the Organisation Committee.

The President also informed the meeting that he had received a deputation from the Social Democratic Federation, who had waited upon him for the purpose of requesting that Mr. Watts should withdraw from the School Board Election, and that they had been notified Mr. Watts would adhere to his resolve. It was then unanimously agreed that Miss Vance should have liberty from the Executive to assist Mr. Watts in every way possible in his candidature.

Mr. Heaford introduced a matter at the desire of the Belfast Branch, but it was ruled to be admissible only at the Society's Annual Conference, and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, Asst. Sec.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING, held at Hall of Science September 6; Mr. G. Ward in the chair. Present—G. Standing, R. O. Smith, W. H. Baker, J. Neate, W. G. Renn, H. Rowden, R. Dowding, F. Schaller, B. Munton, Mrs. Fisher, Miss Vance, and the Secretary. Branch Secretaries—A. Wheeler and G. J. Warren.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Treasurer's report received.

Correspondence from the Battersea Branch was again discussed, and the Secretary received instructions to write. The Branch Grants Committee's report was received, and their recommendations were adopted.

The Secretary reported that the excursion to Margate was highly successful. Other small matters of business were dealt with, and the meeting adjourned.

ANNIE G. BROWN, Hon. Sec.

Obituary.

By the death of Professor Helmholtz Germany has lost one of her foremost natural philosophers. Professor Helmholtz, by his popular lectures on scientific subjects, did much to make himself entitled to the distinction of being the Tyndall of Germany, as the greater boldness of Haeckel gives him the title of the Huxley of the Fatherland. Professor Helmholtz rejected the hypothesis of design, and was one of the first to demonstrate and teach the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy.

THE KORAN.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MAHOMMED.

THE extracts following are all taken from the official report of the Chicago Parliament of Religions:—

The Koran forbids the propagation of Islamism by force. It says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion; the right way has been made clearly distinguishable from the wrong one. If the Lord had pleased, all who are on the earth would have believed together; and wilt thou force men to be believers?"

The Koran places woman on an equality with man. Sura 33, v. 35, says: "Truly, the men who resign themselves to God, and the women; the men and the women who believe . . . for them hath God prepared forgiveness and a rich recompense."

Ch. 33. "O prophet, say unto thy wives, if ye seek the present life, and the pomps thereof, come, I will make a handsome provision for you, and I will dismiss you with an honorable dismissal; but if ye seek God and his apostles and the life to come, verily God hath prepared for such of you as work righteousness a great reward."

"Happy and fortunate," says the Koran, "is the man who has only one wife, pious and virtuous."

The Koran forbids slavery, and makes the freeing of a slave one of the most meritorious acts a man can perform.

Sura 34: 33. "Unto such of your slaves as desire a written deed, allowing them to redeem themselves on paying a certain sum, write one, if you see good in them, and give unto them of the riches of God which he hath given you."

The Koran strictly forbids the use of strong drink; and it has often been observed that those Mussulmans who drink alcohol are those who ape Western styles in dress and manners.

The Koran forbids gambling and prostitution; and these vices, like drunkenness, are almost unknown in Mahomedan lands.

Mahomedanism encourages learning. The Koran says: "Expect no good from a man who is neither learned nor studious." "Learning is a divine precept that every Mussulman must fulfil." "Learned men are the heirs of prophets."

Stanley Lane-Poole writes: "For nearly eight centuries, under her Mahomedan rulers, Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilised and enlightened State. . . . Art, literature, and science prospered as they then prospered nowhere else in Europe. Students flocked from France, and Germany, and England, to drink from the fountains of learning which flowed only in the cities of the Moors. The surgeons and doctors of Andalusia were then in the van of science; women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study, and a lady doctor was not unknown among the people of Cordova. Mathematics, astronomy, and botany, history, philosophy, and jurisprudence, were to be mastered in Spain, and in Spain alone. The practical work of the field, the scientific methods of irrigation, the arts of fortification and ship-building, the highest and most elaborate products of the loom, the graver and the hammer, the potter's wheel and the mason's trowel, were brought to perfection by Spanish lords. In the practice of war, no less than in the arts of peace, they long stood supreme."

To which we may add that, with the fall of Granada, Christianity ushered in a reign of religious bigotry and persecution, of atrocious cruelty and barbarous ignorance, which, in a few generations, reduced the country to depths of poverty, impotence, and mental degradation unequalled in civilised times, and from which she is only just beginning to emerge through the efforts of a noble band of Freethinkers.

The universal idea of the interposition of a personal agency in the most common concerns of every-day life, and the most ordinary natural processes, inherited by the European, has become gradually discarded. As science by successive efforts explains the sequence and changes in natural phenomena, so mysterious to ignorance, the idea of personal agency becomes gradually eliminated, and driven further beyond the regions of direct observation and experience. And, as it escapes ordinary attention, the idea of a supernaturalism slowly fades from the recollection, and ceases to materially influence conduct.—*Westminster Review*.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

As some tall chief, calm eyed and scorning fear,
Ungazing with a heart by purpose fired,
Halts yet upon his path near parting ways—
On one hand safety, rest; the other road
Pointing to duty and, perchance, to death—
His hero-heart will spurn the baser thought;
Strive for the true, all heedless of his fate!

So shall I halt
Full-hearted by the parting streams of Life—
On one hand Self, smooth-flowing, treacherous,
Yet smiling to the eye, on whose fair flood
The many seek their pleasure, deeming wealth
The sole intent of Life—nor see its wrong.
O hollow fraud! Shall I, then, court the past,
And seek to build me on the days long dead—
The pride of class, or baser pride of wealth?
Away with such dead thoughts! Will not man's mind
Yet free itself from such accursed dross,
And soar to higher things? So, then, must I
O'erlive my Self, and seek the other path;
Not courting fortune, but the joy of all;
Sad-hearted, listing always to the moan
Of suffering thousands born to weep and die.

Cast, then, thy lot, O halter by Life's ways!
With those great hero-souls who shun the wrong.
Espouse the naked truth! Tear off the cloak
Which hides a thousand crimes! Dethrone sleek Cant!
Hurl Mammon down! And leave alone the man,
Not cringing slave-like, serf to king or priest,
Unmanned by hellish dogmas, but pure-souled,
A peer among his fellows, brothers all,
And heir come to his own; the earth's broad lands,
His sacred right, and Nature's holy gifts—
Pure air, enjoyment, peace, and common weal!

H. K. SWANN.

Jesus and Adultery.

Mr. Wheeler's article on "The Church and Divorce" reminds one of the discrepancy between the injunction he quotes, "Whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. xix. 9), with the story foisted into John's gospel (chap. viii.) of the woman taken in adultery, a story wanting in the earliest manuscripts. Here, indeed, we have a fine lesson of charity, though as a lesson in jurisprudence it is altogether beside the mark:—

The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,
May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two
Guiltier than him they try.

Truly, the guiltless are never the first to cast the stone, yet might the judges have said to the woman, "It is the law condemns you, and not we." To reconcile the passages we must credit that Jesus wished adulteresses to remain unpunished, yet allowed no man to redeem them with honest love. Is such teaching fitted for the nineteenth century?

QUERIST.

Bible Bestiality.

Not to speak of Genesis xix. 5-32, xxxiv. 2-25, xxxix. 12, Numbers xxv. 8, 1 Kings xxi. 21, Isaiah xxx. 22, Ezekiel xviii. 6, and a multitude of other impurities which are read to English congregations of men, women, and children in the Proper Lessons of our Church, the anatomical minutiae of Genesis xxxviii. 9-28, the true meaning of the words which we render "male" and "female" in Genesis i. 27, and the constant allusions to circumcision, and to the word *פרצות*, *praputium* (e.g., Exodus iv. 25), which, by its very meaning, suggests the filthiest ideas, but which the Jews did not hesitate to use as the name of a place (Josh. v. 3); nay, the simple fact that a champion was allowed to lay at his king's feet a just tale of two hundred *praputia* as the price of a princess's hand (1 Samuel xviii. 27)—all this shows that the appropriateness of an interpretation of the Hebrew text is not to be judged by its accordance with, or repugnance to, the refinements of modern English diction.—*Dr. W. J. Donaldson, "Christian Orthodoxy," p. 214.*

Religion itself means intolerance. The various sects tolerate nothing but their own dogmas. The priests call themselves shepherds. The passive they drive into their folds. When they have folded you then they are satisfied, they know you fear them: if you stand aloof, *they fear you*. Those who resist they consider as wolves, and, where they have the power, stone them to death.—*Percy Bysshe Shelley*.

A LACK OF LAWYERS.

ST. PETER went grumbling thro' Heav'n one day,
 Picking up prayers, that in bundles lay,
 Strewing the shining golden floor
 In front of his private office door.
 "Humph! here's a falling off," quoth he,
 "And hardly a post-card addressed to me!
 It's all along of that modern thought
 That meddlesome old Darwin taught,
 Cracking my fine old institution
 With his confounded evolution!
 He and his followers ought to go
 To—well! To the other place, you know.
 For in their books there's scarce a page
 But makes old Moses dance with rage.
 I must to work! Bless me! What's that?
 Fetch me my halo, or a hat!
 Go—fly! and close the great front door;
 I never smelt such a smell before.
 'Pon my soul! I believe Old Nick
 Has played me another dirty trick.
 For goodness me! Whence comes this smell?
 What's that? Yes! 'tis—a crack in Hell."
 With heav'nly handkerchief to nose,
 The angry saint now swiftly goes
 Towards the spot where vapors rise,
 Like yellow stains on the azure skies.
 "Where's Lucifer?" he cried. A crowd
 Of little devils laughed aloud,
 And through the glow the saints could see
 A form of peerless majesty.
 For Satan is a prince, you know—
 Perfect in form, except his toe.
 And as the saint, still dazzled, stares,
 The monarch of the realms downstairs
 Politely bows, and requests to know
 "How he can serve him down below?"
 At which the saint, with a sounding whack,
 Brings his stick down upon the crack.
 "Look here, Lucifer, this won't do;
 This hole's got to be repaired by you.
 My mind, from being discourteous, shrinks;
 But really your kingdom somewhat—stinks,
 And causes great annoyance here.
 The law upon the matter's clear."
 Satan put on his sweetest smile,
 With which he can e'en saints beguile:
 "Now really, you know, you can't expect
 Me to repair it. I don't object
 To it the least; it's rather nice—
 In fact, this draught's as cool as ice.
 Sorry smoke sets you coughing. Well,
 But sulphur's quite a healthy smell."
 Pete's eyes were streaming with the smoke;
 He dried them; then with fury spoke:
 "You're much mistaken if you think
 We'll put up long with such a stink.
 I don't know and I don't care
 Who made the place, but you're in there
 In full possession. Barring flaws
 In our agreement, there's no clause
 Which stipulates that I must mend
 All damages. Good heav'ns! I spend
 Enough of hard-earned Peter's pence,
 Without incurring fresh expense!"
 "Extremely sorry," quoth the fiend, "I'm sure!
 Can only repeat what I said before.
 I really can't be more explicit, or
 Praps you'd write to my solicitor;
 I forget his name, but never mind,
 Put Smith or Brown; it's sure to find—
 There's legions of them down below;
 I meet one every step I go.
 And now ta-ta! I'll meet you soon—
 At next assizes in the moon."
 St. Peter saw no help for it,
 So, with some trouble, wrote a writ,
 Signed it and sealed it with his key,
 And sent it off immediately.

Some days thereafter, in the crater,
 Which lies across the moon's equator,
 The court was held, in which the cases
 Of candidates for heav'nly places,
 Appeals from those in Purgatory
 To hurry on their path to glory,
 And such like actions, all are tried.
 St. Michael comes monthly to preside.
 Peter and Lucifer themselves debate
 Before the glorious Magistrate
 On small occasions; but to-day
 The benches groan 'neath a great array

Of legal ghosts, well-known Q.C.'s
 And rising juniors, quite at ease.
 But, strange enough, one side alone
 They fill before the Angels' throne—
 The left-hand side; the other's bare,
 Not the vestige of a wig is there.
 The court is cleared, the Judge installed,
 And "Peter *versus* Lucifer" is called;
 When, apologising if he's late,
 The guardian of the Heav'nly gate
 Comes bustling in with flying gown,
 And wig beneath his halo crown.
 "Fact is, M'Lud, these last ten days
 I've ransacked nooks and dim bye-ways,
 And every likely spot that lies
 Within the margin of the skies;
 And now I beg to withdraw this case,
 For I can't find a lawyer in the place."

QUASI NESSUNO.

BOOK CHAT.

MESSRS. BLISS, SANDS, & FOSTER, of Craven-street, Strand, send us a copy of a second edition of *The Story of My Dictatorship*, already noticed in these columns. It is now issued at one shilling.

The ninth volume of Professor Huxley's *Collected Essays* contains his important Romanes discourse on "Evolution and Ethics," which he has prefaced with much new matter, "chiefly elementary and recapitulatory."

The Rev. F. P. Evans has, in a little book, tackled the old question, *When were the Gospels Written?* but, as he starts with Eusebius and gives us all the old stuff assigned to the old value, irrespective of the results of modern criticism, his work does not exceed the value of a compilation for school children.

Chess players will be glad to have a permanent record of *The Games in the Steinitz-Lasker Championship Match* (Leeds: 19 Bagley-street), compiled by J. G. Cumming, and annotated by such masters as Gunsberg, Hoffer, Mason, and Pollock.

Woman, and Her Place in a Free Society, by Edward Carpenter (Manchester Labor Press, 59 Tib-street; 6d.), is a serious and thoughtful essay by a Socialist who believes in freedom. *Marriage in Free Society* is another sixpenny pamphlet by the same writer. He holds that "love is doubtless the last and most difficult lesson that humanity has to learn; in a sense it underlies all the others."

Mr. Andrew Lang has devoted a big volume to *Cock-lane and Common Sense*. We should have thought common-sense forbid the resuscitation of the credulity of the last century, when the Ghost of Cock-lane was the Mahatma Koot Hoomi of the time. Of course, Mr. Lang imports a lot of information about ghost-belief, in which he professes to find an insoluble mystery, although Dr. E. B. Tylor, in his *Primitive Culture*, has given him the key to clear it up. As far as the Cock-lane ghost is concerned, it appears to us the whole affair was a stupid fraud. The ghost was supposed to be a murdered paramour of a Mr. Kempe, who appeared to a daughter of Mr. Parsons in Cock-lane, Holborn. The story was abetted by several parsons, and believed in by Dr. Johnson. Mr. Kempe brought an action for conspiracy against his character against Mr. and Mrs. Parsons, the Rev. Mr. Moore, Mr. James, and one Mary Frazer. He gained his case. The clergyman and Mr. James had to pay £300 and costs, and Mr. Parsons was set in the pillory. His daughter, who seems to have been at the bottom of the affair, took a board to bed with her, on which she scratched, rapped, and made ghostly noises.

The death of Professor Brugsch, the most famous of Egyptologists, recalls the old question whether the story of the Children of Israel having ever been there is anything better than a myth. The late Professor carefully examined everything bearing on Egyptian history, without being able to find any proof of the truth of the Jewish traditions. Both Professor Bernhard Stade, in his *Geschichte des Volkes Israels*, and Dr. Edward Meyer, in his *Geschichte des alten Egyptens*, ridicule and reject the notion that there is any basis of historical truth in the story of the sojourn in Egypt, the miraculous ten plagues, and the scarce and wondrous wanderings in the wilderness,

Bible Mistranslations.

Malcolm, in his *Travels in Hindustan and China*, gives a few instances, such as John i. 1, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was unto the Lord God Boodh, and the word was the Lord God Boodh," making the gospel, indeed, Buddhistic, as some suspect it originally to have been. He also mentions Matt. v. 3 as being translated "Blessed are the destitute of life"; Acts i. 8, "Ye shall receive the power of life and death"; 1 Cor. v. 6, "A little crocodile crocodileth the whole lump."

The difficulty of accurate translation is much increased by the fact that many tongues are quite destitute of abstract or metaphysical terms. To render such important and oft-recurring words as sin, faith, grace, salvation, righteousness, redemption, even with cautious circumlocution, fails to convey the correct idea. Some tribes are even without expressions for ordinary moral notions. A missionary in Africa found that asking the natives to love Jesus conveyed only disgusting sensual ideas. Another missionary was asked what became of thin persons when they died. It turned out that the word "good" was similar to the word "fat," and had been so translated. He had been preaching, as the blessed gospel, that only the fat can enter heaven.

When we find that in standard English translations passages may be rendered so variously as "Bless God and die" or "Curse God and die," "Repent" or "Do penance," and notice that what is translated "owl" in the Authorised Version is rendered "ostrich" in the Revised Version, we may imagine what confused notion of the word of God is often given to savages. Fancy a cannibal's thoughts on reading, in his own tongue, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed!"

Costly Luxuries.

In the past men have not only lost much time in devising and creating gods, and in striving to placate them and to appease their anger, but it has cost the world an incomputable amount in getting up these gods, and in supporting the countless priests which these gods have been thought to require, to study and reveal their will, and by powers of persuasion to induce them to change their course. If the labor and money which have been expended in the manufacture of gods, in the erection of houses and temples for them to be worshipped in, and to pay the millions of priests who, in the aggregate, have been supported in idleness and luxury for pretending to interpret and reveal the will of the gods, had been employed in benefiting the world and improving the human race, every swamp upon the face of the earth could have been drained; every country could have been furnished with good carriage roads and railroads; every square mile could have been supplied with a good, durable school-house, a teacher, and a good library.

If the wealth that has been paid to priests for proclaiming fables and fictions and falsehoods about gods and the will of gods could have been employed in increasing the knowledge and usefulness of the human race, the world to-day would be immensely in advance of that which it now occupies. If the time that has been employed in working and listening for and to priests could have been used in studying the laws of the universe, the world would be vastly more advanced in truth, virtue, and happiness.—*Mrs. O. E. Daniels.*

The Sixth Commandment.

In the education of children and in the leading of nations there is nothing more stupid and barbaric than prohibitory laws and regulations. In my circles I would rather endure faults and weaknesses until they had made room for better qualities than merely get rid of the faults, and leave nothing sensible to take their places. Man naturally loves to do that which is good and practical, if he only can. . . . He does vicious things only when kept in idleness from *ennui*. It displeases me to see children repeat the Ten Commandments. There is the sixth, for instance: "Thou shalt do no murder." As though men had the least desire to kill one another. But is it not a barbarous thing to forbid children to commit murder? If it read: "Take care of the life of others; remove what might be injurious to them; help the other, and save him at risk of your own life! If you do him harm, think that you harm yourself." That is the way commandments ought to read among intelligent and sensible nations.—*Goethe.*

Longfellow Reversed.

He goes on Sunday to his church,
He sits among his boys,
He hears the parson pray. And preach?
No! No! a snoring noise
From his nostrils shows that some sweet repose
He in sermon time enjoys,

PROFANE JOKES.

EH! WATT'S THIS?—Why should certain works of Dr Watts be carefully kept out of the hands of the young?—Because of their hymn-morality.

Visitor—"So you have a little baby brother?" Little Girl—"Yes'm. I prayed for a little baby sister; but I suppose the angels had run out of girl babies. I forgot to tell them there wasn't any hurry."

Sunday-school Teacher—"Can you imagine anything more wonderful than this miracle of the whale swallowing Jonah?" Johnny—"Yes, sir, I can!" Sunday-school Teacher—"Well, what is it?" Johnny—"Jonah swallowing the whale, sir."

Young Sharples—"What was the name of that notorious fellow—the first Anarchist on record?" Old Sharples—"First Anarchist? Eh! Why, Noah." Young Sharples—"What?" Old Sharples—"Well! If he was not an *arkist*, what was he?"

Sunday-school Teacher—"Have you made anyone happy this week?" Little Girl—"Yes'm. Mrs. Highcup has a baby—an awful ugly, red-faced brat; so when I met her yesterday I told her she had the sweetest, prettiest baby that ever I saw."

Mrs. Jones: "Wasn't that a powerful address of Brother Smith's, at the experience meeting?" Deacon Jones—"Oh, Smith is a good man, but he's a little conceited. To hear him talk, you would think there never was a hardened sinner in the world except him."

Spinster—"Did you never wish that you could have lived in Paradise?" Widow—"My dear, I'm afraid that you are not well posted in the Bible. How could a woman desire to live in a place where there was only one man?" Spinster—"M'yes! Perhaps that's why Eve took the apples!"

The Sayings of Jabez.

And in those days came Jabez, saying, "Make unto yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations. Verily, verily, I say unto you that whosoever giveth unto me, to him shall it be multiplied exceedingly: to some sixty-fold, to some a hundred-fold. Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or lands for my sake but shall receive a hundred-fold." And the people followed him, and would make him their ruler. And when they had no more goods Jabez saith unto them: "To him that hath shall be given, and to him that hath not shall be taken away, even that he hath. Yea, verily, a little while and thou shalt see me, and a little while and thou shalt not see me. Remember Lot's wife." And his disciples said, "Explain, O Jabez." And he answered, "Beware of the leaven of the detectives." And he departed secretly out of their coasts. And they cried after him, "Return, O Jabez, and give unto us, some sixty-fold and some a hundred-fold." And he answered unto them, "Many are called, but few are extradited." And they were astonished at his doctrine. LIBERATOR.

Unfounded Rumors.

That the Archbishop of Canterbury is going to live on £500 a year and devote the rest of his income to the poor.

That the Bishop of London is going to ask for a revision of the story of Christ's doings at Cana, in Galilee.

That Mr. H. P. Hughes is going to own up about the Atheist Shoemaker.

That Mrs. Besant has seen a Mahatma.

That Prophet Baxter has executed a deed of gift devoting all his belongings to the poor on April 1, 1901, the date of the end of the world.

That Mr. W. T. Stead is engaged on a translation of the *Facetiae* of Poggio, the Papal Apostolical secretary.

That the Pope is preparing an Encyclical in favor of universal secular education.

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- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (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) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "Why Should we Lead Moral Lives?—A Secularist's Reply." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)
 BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, G. H. Young (S.D.F. candidate for School Board) will give an address. 9.15, social club. Tuesday, at 8.30, dancing class. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.
 BERMONDSEY (Gladstone Club): Thursday, C. J. Hunt, "The Inquisition."
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "If Christ Came to London?"
 ISLINGTON (19 Alwyne-road, Canonbury): 3.30, members' quarterly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.15, F. Haslam, "Religion in Board Schools."
 CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. Snell, "Christianity Tried by Jury."
 CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, debate between A. B. Moss and Samuel Hale, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"
 DEPTFORD (Broadway): 7. A. G. Herzfeld, "The Bible."
 EDMONTON (Angel-road): 6.30, debate between J. Clarke and C. Cohen, "Christianity and Secularism."
 FINSBURY PARK (near the band stand): 11, C. Cohen, "The Dream of Immortality"; 8, R. Rosetti, "Russian Gods."
 HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, C. J. Hunt, "Inspiration." Thursday, at 8, S. E. Easton, "Hell, Heaven, and Purgatory."
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Inspiration"; 3.30, C. J. Hunt, "Theology in the Board Schools." Wednesday, at 8, J. Rowney, "Are the Teachings of Christ the Highest Ideal and Best Guide in Human Life?" Friday, Sept 14, at 7, debate between James Rowney and Mr. Connolly, "Charles Bradlaugh a Greater Man than Jesus Christ."
 ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, W. T. Steele, "Science and Religion."
 KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, St. John, "The Curse of Superstition."
 LAMBETH (Kennington-green, near Vestry Hall): 6.30, W. Heaford, "Science and the Bible."
 LRYTON (High-road, near Vicarage-road): 11.30, a lecture.
 MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Ten Commandments."
 REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester-gate): 11, J. Rowney will lecture; 3, W. Heaford, "Belief and Unbelief"; 5, debate between F. S. Paul and Mr. Dunn, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"
 VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 11.15, a lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.
 WALTHAMSTOW (Markhouse-road): 6.30, a lecture.
 WESTMINSTER (Old Pimlico Pier): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christian Persecution; or, Nine Months in Holloway Gaol." (Collection for N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.)
 WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Free-thought Recantations"; 7, C. James, "Heresy: a Plea for Mental Freedom." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, Nelson-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, T. Garner, "The Mighty Search for Truth."
 DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life"; 2.15, "The Church and Science"; 6.30, "Miracles and Science."
 LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Ann-street): 11, G. W. Foote, "Christian Socialism"; 3, "Lord Salisbury on Evolution, Design, and God"; 7, "Is Immortality a Blessing?"
 NEWCASTLE (Ante-Room above Good Templar Hall, 2 Clayton-street): 3, members' meeting.
 READING (Foresters' Hall, West-street): 7, members' meeting.
 ROCHDALE: 3.30, Saturday, Sept. 20, pilgrimage to Owen's College Museum. Meet at Rochdale Station at 1.45.
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King-street): 6.30, ethical class; 7.30, business meeting.
 SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street): 7, a lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNLEY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "Social Parasites"; 6, "Miracles."

CHATHAM (near Waghorn Memorial): 11, T. Garner, "The Light of the World."
 HEYWOOD (Market Ground): Thursday, Sam Standing, "Jonah and Other Tales."
 NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Hall Nicholson, "The Church the Enemy of the People."
 ROCHDALE (Town Hall-square): 11, S. Standing, "Sabbatarianism"; 3, "Creation Visualised—Day IV."; 6.30, "John the Baptist."
 SUNDERLAND (near the Miners' Hall, Silkworth): 11, a lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—Sept. 16, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 20, Wood Green; 23, m. and a, Victoria Park; 27, Wood Green; 30, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 16, Dundee; 23, Edinburgh; 30, Glasgow. October 7, Belfast; 14, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 21, Huddersfield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 16, Clerkenwell Green; 23, Westminster. October 14, Camberwell.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—September 23, Hall of Science, London.

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