

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XIV.—No. 38.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1894.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## BLESSED ARE THE MEEK.

NOTHING could be more misnamed than the Sermon on the Mount. It is obviously not a sermon at all, and never could have been delivered straight off to one congregation. In reality it is a collection of religious and ethical maxims, of various value and significance; maxims that had, in one form or another, been floating about the East for many centuries. Parallels to nearly all, if not the whole, of them may be found in the writings or speeches of ancient teachers, prior to and contemporaneous with Jesus Christ and his early apostles. We have no doubt that this common stock was drawn upon by the unknown authors of the four Gospels, or at least by the earlier Christians whose ideas and legends were embodied in those documents.

This so-called Sermon on the Mount has always been highly lauded in the pulpit, although its teaching has very rarely been reduced to practice, even by those who most vaunted their piety and devotion to Christ. Divines and casuists have, indeed, taught us how to violate every injunction with a good conscience. Where the text is too hard for mortal virtue we have only to regard it as a counsel of perfection, instead of a positive command; and nobody is to be damned for not taking advice. There have always been some mystics, like William Law, for instance, who insisted on the literalness of Christ's teaching. You might not be able to attain to the "Christian Perfection" of the Sermon on the Mount, but you were bound to attempt it, on peril of your eternal damnation. And now that *damnation* is becoming a vulgar word, and *hell* is almost confined to the vocabulary of swearing, there is a growing class of Christian teachers and preachers who bid us look to the Sermon on the Mount as the great charter of humanity. The chief of these is Count Tolstoi, the Russian novelist, who takes every text in its literal meaning, and is prepared to act upon it; only his wife, who is blessed with the worldly prudence of her sex, guards him against the worst effects of such a policy, and sees that he does not become a pauper and a vagabond. Count Tolstoi would have us renounce marriage and all other sexual relationships, take no thought for the morrow, and carry non-resistance to evil to the point of patiently submitting to every outrage and oppression. But this is an extreme case. Other exhorters take the Sermon on the Mount with large grains of salt. They indulge in the greatest liberality of interpretation, and really give us a new Sermon on the Mount, containing not what Jesus Christ did say, but what he would have said if he had possessed the art of making himself understood. It is very kind on their part to make him intelligible, and we hope he is duly sensible of the obligation; but, at the same time, it is to be wished that they were a little more intelligible themselves, and a little more in harmony with each other.

Perhaps the most difficult text for the kind ingenuity of these gentlemen is "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." The two halves of this text are as opposed to each other as the front benches in the House of Commons. A table in the one case, and a semi-colon in the other, divides them; but they eternally face each other in an everlasting antagonism.

Meekness is a virtue of which few men are ever proud—if we may be pardoned such a paradox. It is generally

commended in others. What it exactly means is rather to be determined by etymology than example. "Moses was very meek above all men," says the Bible (Numbers xii. 3); but as his meekness was capable of rising to murder, we had better drop the illustration. Johnson defines *meek* as "mild of temper; not proud; not rough; not easily provoked; soft; gentle." That is, *meek* is *meek*, for this is all the definition comes to. Richardson is not more helpful, although he gives a long and valuable series of extracts, showing the use of the word by English writers. It is the more scientific Skeat who throws a real light upon the matter. *Meek* appears to be a compound of softness and pliability. The meek person is a piece of human dough, that can be kneaded and moulded by others. A dog is meek when he takes a licking; a woman is meek when she stands any amount of male brutality; and a man is meek when he bows his head to another man's arrogance. Meekness is passive; it can hardly rise to the level of an active virtue; and perhaps it is only not a vice on the principle that it is better to suffer wrong than inflict it; the *best* thing being to do *neither*.

Whether meekness be good, bad, or indifferent, it will certainly never enable one to "possess the earth." The land of this kingdom is mostly owned by the aristocracy, and they are a remarkably meek body of men. According to Jesus Christ, we have only to be meek enough, and the lords will give us back the land. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." So they will, so they will—in coffins!

So exquisite is the absurdity of this text that an owl might laugh at it. That is, the text as it stands. But you must not let it stand; you must knock it about, twist it and turn it; and it will look a highly respectable piece of morality. Keep, "inherit," but play the devil with the "earth." Make it mean something else; make it mean anything. Tackle it like Bishop Porteus, who wrote as follows: "By inheriting the earth, he [Jesus] meant inheriting those things which are, without question, the greatest blessings upon earth, calmness and composure of spirit, tranquillity, cheerfulness, and comfort of mind. Now these, I apprehend, are the peculiar portion and recompense of the meek."

There now, you meek people, this is your inheritance of the earth. Not broad acres and big rents, not so much as a moderate-sized farm, not even three acres and a cow; but calmness, composure, tranquillity, cheerfulness, comfort, and such blessings, are to be your "recompense"; that is what you will get for giving up the tangible possessions to the people who are not meek, but very much the reverse. They have the solid property, and you have the spiritual blessings which are promised to poverty and meekness.

Jesus Christ may have meant this—only this, and nothing more; but, in that case, what an unfortunate way he had of expressing himself! It takes a bishop to penetrate the obscurity of his metaphors, and even then a great deal has to be taken on trust from the episcopal interpreter.

Let us brush away these subtleties. It appears to us that if Jesus Christ did not mean what he said, it is impossible for anyone to say what he did mean. The secret perished with him, and "interpretations" are only conjectures.

The plain truth is that the poor never were blessed, and never will be. Wiser than Jesus Christ was the old Hebrew who prayed for neither riches nor poverty, but the golden mean of sufficiency. Nor will the meek ever inherit the earth. Certainly they have not yet made a

beginning. If the people are to become possessed of the land, which is their natural birthright, they will have to abandon meekness, and stand up resolutely for justice. Popular rights are never conceded: they are always wrested from the privileged classes. Kings and aristocracies give way slowly before democratic pressure. Every step of progress involves a heavy battle. And the Church has always befriended the wealthy and titled usurpers, preaching meekness to the people in order that they might not inherit the earth.

G. W. FOOTE.

### THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.

THERE has not been, since the Education Act first came into force, a more momentous London School Board election than the one which will be decided this November. Not the metropolis only, but the whole country—nay, the Colonies and English-speaking America—has been moved by the religious squabbling which took place at the meetings of the Board this year. The clerical majority on the Board have carried matters with a high hand. They have made religious education as dogmatic as they possibly can, without infringing the provision of the Act under which they sit. They have, moreover, done their utmost to thwart the very purpose for which they are called together. They have understaffed the teachers, and kept down the efficiency of the schools, in order that children may be driven into the sectarian schools; and some of them are not ashamed to appeal for support on this very ground. They have refused to build schools when required, and thus presented parents no alternative between sectarian education and ignorance. In the district where I reside, in the Finsbury division, for which Mr. Watts is a candidate, a Board-school has a list of over a hundred applications for admission, which it is obliged to refuse. They have spent their time wrangling over the Incarnation and the Trinity, and harassed the teachers by making plain that more importance is placed on the inculcation of "the Christian religion," which they are not qualified to teach, than upon the secular education, for which they are qualified.

I love the wise moderation which prefers to understate a case. But this question of education cannot be considered trivial in any aspect. It is the one we have to fall back on for our main hopes of the progress of the race. The amount of injury done by the instillation of superstition into infant minds is incalculable. Apart from the wasteful dogmas and inhumane intolerance there is the waste of precious time on matters which often have to be slowly and painfully unlearned. Every hour devoted to instilling Bible nonsense is taken from more important subjects. What possible connection can there be between the theological dogmas, insisted upon in the circular to the teachers, and the educational and social efficiency of the children? Their real object is the inculcation of the spirit of subservience, which is at the root of all theological dogmas.

Unfortunately, the experience of previous elections has shown that among the masses there is great apathy upon this vital question. Immediate concerns are so absorbing that the effect on the progress of the race of allowing their children's schooling to remain in the hands of the clergy and the privileged classes needs to be brought home to them. So conservative a thinker as Mr. Benjamin Kidd remarks: "We must expect to have to meet, before long, demands for a very considerable extension of the education provided by the State and for State control in the interests of the people of higher as well as of elementary education." For, in truth, the restriction of higher education to the wealthy constitutes one of the most exclusive and influential of its privileges. But how can we hope the demand for University Extension, and for opportunities for the fittest boys and girls to be drafted to free higher schools, to come to the front, while the masses are apathetic as to who has control of their children's education?

Secularists should everywhere make an effort to see that their principles in this important topic are brought in evidence, for they are so simple and just that they must in time commend themselves to common-sense, and the wrangling of the sects will powerfully aid the development of the secular solution, which would leave the mind of the

child free from their jangling and strife. In London, while helping every candidate who is pledged to the secular ticket, Secularists may do well to concentrate their efforts on the return of Mr. Watts, whose address is now before the electors of Finsbury.

What is wanted is a man able to meet Mr. Diggle with his own weapons, who will unite the *fortiter in re* with the *suaviter in modo*, never budge an inch from principle, attend all committees, and never lose an opportunity of forwarding the cause to which he is pledged. In Mr. Watts we have a gentleman of eloquence, with abundant experience in the not universal art of stating a case so as to ensure attention and respect. It is a poor compliment to say he can hold his own against the clerical members of the Board, or such lay clericals as Sir Richard Temple. He can do more. He can make his presence on the Board a standing reminder that the days of clerical dominion are passing, and that endowment of religion in the school is as unjust, and even more objectionable, than its endowment in the Church, since it is a suborning of the minds of the future generation at a time when they are unable to reason for themselves.

As the one candidate who goes for the definite principle that public money, public buildings, and public servants should not be employed in teaching religion, Mr. Watts's candidature will, of course, be scowled on by so-called Progressives, who wish only to maintain the compromise. But to that compromise Secularists were no party. It was a compromise between Christians, and, naturally, illogical. If the majority may have their fetish book taught as the word of God, why should they not be allowed to explain it as they please? If one dogma may be taught, why should not the entire creed of the majority be inculcated? The Nonconformists must be driven back on the old principle with which they successfully combatted the imposition of Church rates—the principle that the State has nothing to do with the teaching of religion. It is as much a violation of liberty and justice to levy a rate to teach Christian dogmas in State schools as to levy a rate for teaching the Thirty-nine Articles in a State Church. For this reason I heartily hope that all Freethinkers will disregard the blandishments of the "Progressives," and work and plump for the Secular candidate.

J. M. WHEELER.

### THE CHURCH AND THE LABOR QUESTION.

THE clergy and the leading supporters of the Church have been persistent opponents of the rights and independence of the working classes, who have been regarded by their self-appointed "spiritual advisers" as an inferior section of the community. Instead of inculcating self-help and personal independence, the policy of the Church and the aristocracy has been to keep the people in subjection, and to teach them to obey their "pastors and masters," to "honor the king," and submit themselves to their "governors and teachers." To such an extent was this abject servitude practised that, until recently, no stranger, who was supposed to belong to the "higher classes," could pass through our villages without being received with cringing servility from the cottagers. Such was the humiliation to which they had been reduced by the teachings of the Church. The enforcement of authority by the clergy and the wealthy classes upon the unprotected laborers, without their assent or consent, has been one of the chief causes of the degraded condition into which labor has fallen.

This priestly and aristocratic injustice was, no doubt, the legitimate result of the nature, teachings, and government of the Church, which has always been allied with the throne and the capitalists. The vast incomes of the clergy came through the landlords and employers, whose wealth had been obtained from the labors of the producing classes. The diffusion of wealth throughout all history appears to have been regulated by the ruling powers in the Church and in the State. True, there have been a few exceptions, but, as a rule, the Church, the so-called nobles, and the occupants of the throne have stood by each other in imposing unequal burdens upon the people, and in resisting their demands for reform. No wonder, therefore, that the clergy fought shy of taking part in trade disputes;

for, had they done so, they must have taken the side of the employers, in order to retain their influence with the wealthy portions of their congregation. As Phillip Thompson, in his *Politics of Labor*, writes: "The modern fashionable Church is a capitalistic institution, membership in which is sought for its commercial and social advantages. The pastor, absolutely dependent on the favor of the rich and influential, becomes the obsequious sycophant of wealth, and the ready defender of the system which he, in common with his patrons, has a personal interest in maintaining."

That the labor question, as it now stands, is fraught with grave difficulties must be apparent even to the merest superficial observer. It certainly behoves all who seek the improvement of society to endeavor to ascertain the cause of this unfortunate condition of things, and also to adopt the best means whereby the evils can be remedied. This is, undoubtedly, a most important subject, and one that all Secularists ought to grapple with, for among their officially prescribed "Practical Objects" is "The promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations." Thus to make efforts to procure social reform is a positive duty in Secular propaganda. In dealing with the perplexed subject of labor we come in contact with evils that are legacies of the past, of the time when the Church was supreme, and had to encounter no opposition in the carrying out of that which its adherents deemed best for the general welfare. Here ample opportunity was afforded for this "sacred institution" to show what its real desires were. Surely, if its promoters had been friends of the laborers, they would not have been in that deplorable condition in which this century found them.

It must not be forgotten that for many centuries the Church was the only educator, or rather instructor, of the nation. It controlled the State, the school, and the masses. So much was this the case that for ages the people were not only compelled to do what the Church bid them, but they were not allowed to do anything to which the Church objected. Now, what was the result of this enforced slavery to the will of "the powers that be"? First, that the Church refused to recognise the rights of the laborer, who was kept as a serf, and whose chief duty it was to obey and serve his master. Secondly, the Church did its best to prevent the laborer from possessing the means that would have enabled him to emancipate himself from the low and grovelling position into which he had been forced by ecclesiastical authority. These means were: (1) Education; for ignorance is the soil of submission under wrong. Knowledge begets activity, and this is followed, as a rule, by a development of the law of progress. (2) The extension of the franchise, which gave the people the power to secure their social rights, and to destroy that monopoly which deprived them of a fair opportunity of securing their proper position in the community. (3) The right of Free thought, which gives to each and all the liberty of believing according to their individual judgment. These were the means that were ultimately employed by the working classes to throw off the oppression of the Church and the aristocracy, in so far as that deliverance from their power has already been achieved.

The reader will find, in Washington Wilks's *History of the Half Century, from 1800 to 1850*, ample evidence of the opposition of the Church and its aristocratic allies to the progress—political and social—of the people. After giving an array of facts and figures against the Church, the writer states, on pages 343-4, that religious influences have "been usually in antagonism with some civil interest or right. . . We have seen religion as embodied in a Protestant establishment resisting the concession of civil rights to four millions of British subjects, till statesmen and soldiers could see no alternative but concession or the horrors of civil war; resisting the removal of degrading disabilities from the members of communities similar in faith to their oppressors, until the growth of political liberty wrested away the power of vengeance and tyranny; resisting the concession of political enfranchisement to the demands of an unanimous and indignant nation; resisting, in short, whatever was obnoxious to the ruling powers, so long as it was obnoxious; active only in defence of its own outrageous privileges and noisome corruptions. We have seen in Dissenting sects, it may be, something of a similar spirit—indifference to all but the defence of transmitted immunities, release from positive grievances, and retrogression in

numerical strength. Of united, resolute action against institutions incompatible in their very existence with the spirit and traditions of Nonconformity, of generous co-operation with the mass of the people for their enfranchisement and elevation—we have seen little or nothing."

It is necessary that these important facts should be remembered, because, as the Church can no longer act in the same despotic manner that it formerly did, it seeks to pose as the friend of labor. What a change of front! What a pandering to selfish interests! When the clergy had the power to do what they preferred, they opposed reform; but when they could no longer resist it, they sought to share in its triumphs, and to applaud its success. It is the old story, for the same thing happened in connection with the abolition of slavery, the educational conflict, and the victories of science. And now they are adopting the same course in reference to labor.

The facts of history, however, are against them. From these facts we learn that the Church has not been in the past, any more than it is now, in favor of the true interests of labor, and that it is not likely the clergy will side with the employed against the unjust demands of the employers, upon whose pecuniary aid they have to depend for their livings. Therefore, in my opinion, the solution of the labor question rests with the working classes themselves. The agencies upon which they must rely for self-redemption are thought, prudence, determination, and mutual confidence. Let the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" acquire a knowledge of their duties and responsibilities, allied with a firm resolve to perform the one and fulfil the other with self-dignity and mutual considerations; then they will be enabled to do for themselves what their predecessors expected others to do for them. If the laborers of to-day would but recognise this truth, and practically act upon it, they would soon learn their own strength, and then legislation would be found to be directed, not to furthering the interests of a few of the community, but towards promoting the happiness and prosperity of all parts of the body politic, and to the successful amelioration of the social, moral, and intellectual condition of the so-long-neglected proletariat.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

## IS THEOLOGY A SCIENCE?

THEOLOGY has sometimes been called the science of sciences. It is a science so-called which relates to the attributes and purposes of God. There is no doubt that thousands and hundreds of thousands of cultivated minds have given their best thought through years to the study of this subject, and vast libraries of books have been written to expound it; but is theology, properly speaking, a science? There is no question but that connected with the study of it have been conducted investigations in ancient history, in pre-historic archaeology, in geography, in philosophy and in science, which have resulted in an enlargement of human knowledge and an improvement in man's social and moral condition; but while these subjects, studied in connection with theology, undoubtedly belong to the province of human knowledge, and, therefore, to the province of science, is it true that God can be made a subject of study and knowledge in regard to his nature and plans, supposing that his plans can be ascertained and classified in a manner to justify us in calling theology a science? What do we know, what can be learned, in regard to the nature of God? God, it is said, is infinite. Can the infinite be defined? Can it be comprehended? Is it picturable to the human mind? If it be considered that God is pure intelligence, what conception of pure intelligence can we form except as it resembles the only intelligence with which we are acquainted, the intelligence of man, not to speak of the lower intelligence of the brutes?

The intelligence of man is growth, an expansion. It implies bodily senses, the power of perception and something about it to perceive, the power of conception, the revival of impressions made upon the brain, the multiplication of these conceptions or ideas, and their aggregation through weeks and months and years in a coherent, unified

system, producing the intelligence of the experienced and educated mind; but all this implies organism and environment and action, and interaction between the two. It implies consciousness and growth, the growth of intelligence, from that of the infant to that of the adult. It implies surroundings, and, therefore, finiteness.

When we speak of the intelligence of God do we mean that God is a limited being who has an organism, who is finite in space, and, therefore, who is surrounded by objects which he can perceive; that he has ideas that had a beginning; that they are based upon what he sees about him; that he has imagination by which he brings to mind things that are at a distance from him; that he has memory by which he recalls at one time things that had been forgotten; that he has reason, the faculty of perceiving relations and comparing ideas and deducing conclusions, and thereby adding to his knowledge; that he possesses sympathy, or has the capacity for suffering like finite beings, and therefore feels regret and sorrow over suffering because of this sympathy? No. Yet it is the only kind of intelligence of which we can form any definite idea. Of infinite intelligence we can form no conception whatever; we cannot form any idea of that which the two words "infinite intelligence" represent. The words, as we use them, are as contradictory as the expressions, "a square circle" or a "round triangle." Then it follows that the word "God" in philosophy is like the letter  $x$  in an indeterminate algebraic equation; it stands for the unknown. We have no formula by which we can solve the problem and learn what the symbol represents; that is only saying that the mathematics of human intelligence is inadequate to deal with the problem of the infinite. This being so, what validity is there in the claim that the noumenon, or cause and basis of all things, that which lies beneath all phenomena, that which is the ultimate of every activity, physical and psychical, throughout the entire universe during beginningless and endless time, is a proper object of scientific study? How can it be truthfully maintained that we have sufficient definite knowledge of the infinite unknown cause of phenomena, verified and put into classified form, to justify us in saying that we possess scientific knowledge of it, and that what we know of it makes the science of theology the greatest of all sciences?

The fact is, theology is not a science, and never was one. Science is knowledge, but there can be no science of anything of which there can be no knowledge, and there can be no knowledge of anything that does not come within the range of our human faculties. If one uses the terms which are employed to describe human intelligence to represent, for the satisfaction of the undeveloped mind, that which philosophy knows is unrepresentable, let it be so understood; but for the thinker to claim that these conceptions of God are absolutely truthful, and that the utterance and reiteration of such speculations are the teachings of science, is simply to claim what is obviously absurd.

—*Ironclad Age.*

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

### A RABBI ON THE BIBLE.

RABBI HIRSCH lately read a paper on the above subject before the University of Chicago, and said:—

"Literary criticism cannot assume that, in the development of Old Hebrew literature, the laws regulating the growth of the literary productions of other peoples were not operative. On the contrary, it starts from the recognition that these laws are universal and admit of no exceptions. History always precedes literature; the constitution of a nation, the nation's legal code. Nowhere does any antecedent century anticipate the political, social, or religious needs of a subsequent one.

"The Pentateuch presupposes a people devoted to agriculture. It cannot, therefore, have been promulgated before Israel had become the possessor of the land. No tribe or people anywhere begins its life with a literature highly developed, its social organisation perfected to its most minute details, and its religious system defined in crystallised sacerdotalism.

"The sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt seems, to say the least, doubtful. Indications abound that only the Joseph-clans were settled in the Nile Delta. Judah is not of pure 'Hebrew stock,' and was not among the slaves of

Pharaoh. The influence of Egypt was not great in moulding the character of the religion and the literature of these shepherd tribes. There is not the slightest warrant for the assertion that Egyptian elements reappeared in Mosaism. The interests of the rude Semite shepherd-clans centre in fends and the possession of wells. Their religious horizon is not very wide. The Semite, by instinct, is neither monotheistic nor religious.

"The earliest literary productions of the Hebrews reflect, indeed, these conditions. Sword-songs (Genesis iv.) and well-songs, tribal poetry, the book of Yashar, and the Milchamoth Yahvah, prove this. The consciousness of national unity and kinship is weak in the earliest books. The common sanctuary of Yahvah at Sinai served to remind the Beni-Israel of their common descent. Yahvah is in all likelihood a non-Hebrew deity; probably Midianite-Judaic.

"The gradual conquest of the land and the exchange of simple Yahvah-worship for the sensuous cults of the aborigines mark a crisis. Prophetic literature is the precipitate of the conflict of the two forms of worship. During the time of its production, which lasted more than five hundred years, the concept of Yahvah was gradually enlarged and clarified. The legal code is the reflected light of the development of prophetic religion. The first step is the Book of the Covenant, corresponding to the sword and well-song period. It is a collection of precedents, with but little admixture of religious element.

"The second, Elohist and Yahvist, are independent attempts to chronicle the history of the people under the influence of the national idea.

"The third is Deuteronomy, of Jeremiah's time, centralising the cult and moralising the God-concept.

"The Exile marks the fourth phase. Prophetism triumphs, but the national religious policy of the priestly orders succeeds in reconstituting, on sacerdotal lines, the official symbolism.

"Individual as opposed to national holiness, *universalism* as contrasted with racial exclusiveness, finds, during and after the Exile, its expression in the *Wisdom Literature*. The Maccabean uprising produced Daniel and Esther.

"The Hebrew canon was probably closed, in its tripartite construction, in the first pre-Christian century; the law about 400 B.C.; the prophets about 175, and other writings about 100."

### SHEPHERD SMITH.\*

FEW of the present generation have heard of Shepherd Smith, the founder, and for its first fifteen years editor, of the *Family Herald*. When that journal recently celebrated its jubilee it did not so much as mention the man who first sent it swimming on the tide of prosperity, and established all its distinctive features. Doubtless the reason was that the Rev. J. E. Smith was deeply tainted with heresy. Yet he was a remarkable man, and one who, in his generation, did much to liberalise opinion and lead minds into channels now more familiar than in his own day. He was highly esteemed by Mr. Bradlaugh, who held the very antithesis of his philosophy; and one of his disciples, Richard Bedingfield, wrote frequently in early numbers of the *National Reformer* over the initials, "B. T. W. R."

"He who follows truth carries his star in his own brain." Sometimes it overturns it, and the result is—a crank. Such a truth-following crank was James Elishama Smith. Of Scotch parentage, born at Glasgow, November 22, 1801, he was educated for the kirk at the University, and took his degree with honors when but seventeen. He became a probationer and a friend of Pollock, to whom he gave hints for his *Course of Time*. But he drifted away from Calvinistic theology to its very opposite of Universal Salvation. Irving and he were friends, but he soon got beyond that gifted but erratic man, though hopes of a millennial age seem always to have had a rare attraction for him.

For a while he went on his search for inspiration among the followers of Joanna Southcott and John Wroe, at Ashton-under-Lyne. Attracted by the doctrine of the

\* *Shepherd Smith, the Universalist: The Story of a Mind*; being a life of the Rev. James E. Smith, M.A., by W. Anderson Smith. (Sampson, Low, Marston, and Co., & B. Dobell, 77 Charing-Cross-road.)

woman in religion, he appears even himself to have set up, for a brief time, as a sort of prophet. Discarded by his father and family, he came up to London and started lecturing in the Borough. Many of his discourses are preserved in the most extraordinary of his works, entitled *The Anti-Christ, or Christianity Reformed, in which is demonstrated, from the Scriptures, in opposition to the prevailing opinion of the whole religious world, that evil and good are from one source, Devil and God one Spirit, and that the one is merely manifested to make perfect the other*, by the Rev. J. E. Smith, M.A., London, printed and published by B. D. Cousins, 18 Duke-street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. This work is now rare, his biographer telling us that he ordered all remaining copies to be destroyed. "At the same time," he adds, "it is probable he merely considered his peculiar expression of opinion as unsuited to the many, and dangerous in their hands." It is certain that Shepherd Smith held, to the last, his fundamental tenet, that God and the Devil were one. *The Anti-Christ* contains some astonishing writing, that must have been held extremely blasphemous by the orthodox. As Shepherd Smith's biographer gives no extracts from this remarkable work, I may treat readers thereto on some future occasion. Some specimens of his crankery are, however, given from his letters of this and the preceding period.

He said Christ could not be a Savior without a woman. "The reason why our Savior got two asses to ride into Jerusalem was that one was for his wife, but she was not there." That "God is the Devil" he boldly proclaims, and says: "It is a doctrine which makes me now perfectly tranquil, and I love God now instead of shuddering at his frightfulness as I used. The Christian God is a horrible monster—a devil without the name. Mine is a devil by name, but infinitely amiable. I don't fear him." Again, he says: "I believe in all religions. I believe as much in Mahommed as in Moses. Mahommed is an excellent character and a true prophet, but he can't get justice from Christians." In 1837 he wrote: "Future generations, when they have separated the wheat from the chaff, will find, to their astonishment, that the wheat of all religions was the same, and that men are only quarrelling about the chaff." He says to his brother: "I follow the Spirit whithersoever he goeth. You don't follow him at all; he is far in advance of you. He is teaching doctrines as far before St. Paul's as St. Paul was before Moses, but you think you are safe with St. Paul; and has not the Jew as good a right to think himself safe with Moses?"

He was not afraid of blasphemy. "If God be all in all—author of good and evil, Devil and God—then all sorts of words and epithets apply to him, good and bad. You imagine you speak very reverentially of God when you call him pure, clean, and holy; and would think it blasphemy to talk of God living in dung: If so, I say you have yet to 'know the Lord.' The world does not yet know him, and the only way by which it can come to the knowledge of him is by 'blasphemy.' The age of blasphemy is coming, and that will put an end to all schism in religion, for it will show men that God is all in all, and that words are mere wind. There will be a most furious resistance to the Church. Infidelity will triumph. I shall take no hand in it. I don't expect to be long amongst them. The infidels have a work of their own, and I have another."

Convinced that "men will never be made better by preaching," he turned his attention to Socialism. In 1833 he published *A Lecture on a Christian Community*, in which he urges that real Christianity has never been established, or there would be brotherly community of interests. Neither exactly an Owenite nor a Fourierist, he yet wrote in the *Crisis*, the *Pioneer*, and the *Phalanx*. But it was in the *Shepherd*, 1834-38, that he developed the main principles of his doctrine, Pantheism, eventual good to all being, the substitution of charity for faith, and co-operation for competition. Catholicism in sentiment he admired, and he refers to Protestantism as "a miserable, sickly system, a mule begotten by Catholicism upon the mare, or she-ass, of democracy, but quite unable to propagate its own likeness for want of the principle of germination." Although devoted to mysticism and transcendentalism, the *Shepherd* admitted letters from all sorts and conditions of men.

But it was in the *Family Herald* that his nephew thinks Smith found his best vocation. A confirmed old bachelor, there was much in his nature which commended him to women. Most of the correspondents were at first, as now, women. His advice was always genial, shrewd, Scotch

common-sense, kindled by penetrative imagination and the insight of sympathy. With Lady Lytton, a woman of wit, culture, and temper, whom he knew when Miss Wheeler, he had a large correspondence. In his essays he brought to bear a large fund of knowledge on topics of the day, and those who wish to look up such matters as early Socialist schemes might do worse than turn to the back volumes of the *Family Herald*. They cannot do so without coming to the conclusion that the editor, Shepherd Smith, was a man who, in his day and generation, did much for the emancipation, enlightenment, and humanisation of his kind.

J. M. W.

## A TALE OF A FISH.

"Very like a whale."—*Shakespeare*.

OLD Jonah was a prophet bold,  
There's no mistake about it;  
His story's true, because we're told  
We're damned if we should doubt it.

This perky prophet—now in hell—  
Received divine instructions  
To go to Nineveh and yell:  
"Repent! or look for ructions!"

"No Nineveh for me," said Jo,  
"Oh no, Jehovah! No, Pa!  
I'll 'take my hook' Levant-ward, so  
I'll now levant to Joppa."

All trim for sea, he saw when there,  
And hailed, the tartan, "Starfish";  
Then jumped on board, planked down the fare,  
And said, "Third single, Tarshish."

Away he sailed, due west (or north)  
To Spain (or else Cilicia),  
When God a fearful storm sent forth,  
And muttered, "I'll 'Tarshish' ye!"

The pious tars, all in a funk,  
Began to pray and blubber;  
Then lugged old Jonah from his bunk,  
And cried, "Pray up, you lubber!"

"On board some sinner we have got  
Whom God this tempest sets on,  
So we must find him out by lot,  
And turn him into jetson."

By "casting lots" they questioned God—  
The method oriental  
Of what is known as "Tommy Dod"  
In countries occidental.

At "heads or tails" the prophet lost,  
So he his tale narrated;  
Then him amidst the waves they tossed—  
When, lo! the storm abated.

But Joe was salvaged, relates the tale  
In Holy Writ veracious;  
The salvage agent was a whale,  
Or something else cetaceous.

The whale went off a three days' trip,  
With Jonah in its belly,  
Then spat him out on shore to skip  
With "clear keen joyance."—(*Shelley*).

To Nineveh he had to go  
At last, but God relented,  
So Jo ne'er saw its overthrow,  
Because its folk repented.

"Confound it! What a 'sell'!" said Jo;  
"These gods can ne'er be trusted."  
In vain he watched to see the show,  
Then went away disgusted.

### MORAL.

If, safely, thou would'st flee from God,  
Remember Jonah's rambling;  
Shun "casting lots" and "Tommy Dod,"  
Yea! ev'ry form of gambling!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## ACID DROPS.

MR. G. A. SALA tells a good story of Mr. William Black, the novelist. Mr. Black lived in a jerry-built house, and could hear what the next-door people were saying. The neighbors' nursery was on a line with his study, and in this a somewhat numerous family was located. Every morning, as regularly as clockwork, Mr. Black could hear the elder sister call out, "Now, then, you horrid little things, kneel down and say your nasty little prayers." After a profound silence there came a rush and clatter, and the children cried out that they had said their nasty little prayers.

The Reading *Observer* of Saturday, September 15, contained the following curious advertisement:—

£50 REWARD.

THE above reward will be paid to anyone who gives information leading to the discovery of the author or the printer and publisher of certain libellous pamphlets called "The Parson's Idol" and "A Short Account of the Rector's Welcome Home," which were circulated in Sandhurst and other parts of Berkshire in the months of June and July, 1894. Information to be given to

MESSES. BRAIN & BRAIN, Solicitors,  
156, Friar-street, Reading.

We know nothing about the "Short Account," but the "Parson's Idol" is probably the verse on one of our *Freethinker* Tracts. Considering that this verse has been in existence for a great number of years, we fail to see how it can be libellous on any Sandhurst parson, except on the principle of "the cap fitting."

Dr. Joseph Parker has been discoursing at Jarrow, and, according to the long report in the local *Guardian*, he talked a lot of dreadful drivel. Here is a sample: "I have bought books, read books, and studied the books, and have come back to my old mother's Bible, and she said, Joseph read that first line—In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Hallelujah (applause). Praise the Lord (applause)." Evidently the doctor uttered his nonsense to a congenial congregation.

The Romanising Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament ask for prayer for the London School Board majority as to the November election. Canon Bristow, of the L. S. B., is a member of the Confraternity, and Mr. Athelstan Riley a supporter. The C. O. B. S. also ask prayer for "some members of a sisterhood tempted to discontent and insubordination"—which is supposed to have reference to the Kilburn sisters.

The protest of the London School Board teachers (three-fourths of whom have been trained in Church of England colleges, and a third of those equipped at other colleges are members of that Church) against the Circular should only convince sensible people of the necessity for complete secular education. They describe the religious lessons, which include teaching from the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, and Kings; the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, and David—all eminently unfit for children, and say plainly that insistence on theological knowledge means treason to the interests of general education.

The Parish meetings for the first election of Parish Councils are to be held on Tuesday, December 14, not earlier than six o'clock. It is to be hoped that interest will be taken in this attempt to put new life into parish affairs sufficient to bring them out of the control of the parson and the squire. It should be noted that ladies are eligible as parish councillors.

Pasteur Choisy, at the Grindelwald Reunion Conference, deprecated the Union of Church and State, on the ground that governments favored latitudinarianism, as shown in the appointment of infidel teachers like Strauss and Zeller. Connection with the State, he remarked, favored rationalism, many State Church members having in their pulpits denied Christian miracles, the resurrection of Christ, the personality of Christ, and the immortality of man. There was nothing in Swiss law to prevent an Atheist or Mahomedan from preaching in a national church, and public opinion was the only safeguard against such a scandal.

Cardinal Vaughan's address on Christian Reunion is taken, in the Church papers, as a bid for the English Church to submit to Rome by the concession of a married priesthood, English litany, and the recognition of Anglican orders. On these terms, no doubt, the Romanisers in the Church might swallow the infallibility of the Pope and the immaculate conception of the B. V. M., always provided disestablishment spoilt their billets in the Anglican Church, and the Romish Church offered the best opening. When you have swallowed

the Trinity, a few more theological mysteries need not stick in the gullet. But the main thing is the billet.

According to the account of the *Daily News* correspondent, the annual festa of the Madonna of Piedigrotta, near Pompeii, has all the appearance of a Pagan festival. The chief feature is the noise caused by endless tin trumpets of all sizes. But does not the Psalmist say "Praise the Lord" with trumpets and with shawms?

In Arthur-road, N., a placard is exhibited with the words "Call to prayer. Young Men Wanted." Some sacrilegious youth has written beneath, "By Old Women."

Referring to peculiarities of the dress of the fashionable woman of the period, the *Boston Globe* exclaims: "Heaven knows what she will do next year!" We doubt it.

This, says *Texas Siftings*, is how a Kentucky editor champions the Bible: "All the assaults of that blatant infidel who edits the Atheistic sheet across the way cannot bring discredit upon the Bible, or tarnish the fair fame of its illustrious author, Thomas Jefferson."

The *Western Daily Mercury*, a Plymouth paper, gives a long and eulogistic account of the Rev. W. B. Lark, a Bible Christian minister; which account must be chiefly derived from himself. While at Portsmouth, we are told, Mr. Lark delivered to crowded audiences a series of discourses on Christianity and Freethought. "Many young men of the Freethought class," it is said, "had interviews with Mr. Lark, and the *Freethinker* also honored him with its abuse, but he naturally declined to take up a challenge to discuss theological subjects with Mr. Foote, the editor." *Very* naturally, we should say; though, as a matter of fact, Mr. Foote never challenged Mr. Lark or anyone else. As to the interviews that Mr. Lark had with the "young men of the Freethought class," we presume, if there is any truth in the statement, that the said young men were larking.

The Swiss Old Catholic Church has struck out of its creed the Filioque clause about the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Son, thereby assimilating itself to the Greek Church. But in these days nobody cares a penny cake where the Holy Ghost proceeds from.

A "Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society" writes to the *English Churchman* in reference to Mr. Dimbleby, "Premier Chronologist" to the British Chronological Association, who predicts the end of the world in 1898: "As Mr. Dimbleby appeals to the public for £500 to enable him to publish his 'Historical Bible,' or Bible with amended dates, and to assist him otherwise in his undertakings, I think the public should be warned against his alleged chronological and astronomical knowledge. His titles, paraded on his publications, of 'Premier Chronologist,' 'First Calculator of all the Eclipses and Transits,' 'Transit Medalist,' are utterly destitute of value. Having examined his writings, I find them full of astronomical and chronological blunders and absurdities."

The *English Churchman* is highly indignant that a granddaughter of the Queen should have to embrace the faith of the Greek Church in order to become the bride of the Cesarewitch. It asks: "Why should the matter of creed weigh so much more with members of the Greek and Roman Churches than with those of Protestant Churches? and why should the latter be always expected to give way?" The answer is simple. Protestants allow that there is salvation outside their body, but the Greek and Roman Churches are more exclusive, and allow no salvation outside their pale. In theology the only safe side is the one that is most bigoted and exclusive. The *English Churchman* hopes that the Princess Alex of Hesse will assert her religious liberty; but it is rare indeed that princesses allow religion to stand in the way of a good match.

At the Irish Church Conference Canon Powell, in the absence of the Rev. Dr. Rawson Lumby, read his paper on "Modern Theories of the Old Testament"—which he pointed out was endorsed by Jesus Christ in his declaration that Moses wrote of him (John v. 46), and in that all things which are written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning him, shall be fulfilled (Luke xxiv. 44). Some will think that to cite Jesus as authority for the yarns of the Old Testament is to involve both in a common ruin.

The Rev. Canon Nicholson, in the absence of Professor Sayce, read his paper at the Conference on the same subject. Sayce writing for the Church Conference is more orthodox than when writing for a critical public. But he made a few admissions. He said that the Jewish theory that the law had preceded the prophets had been reversed by modern criticism. He tried to show, from the antiquity of letters, the possibility of the antiquity of the Pentateuch. But he

has this difficulty: On his own showing the late books of Chronicles, Esther, and Daniel are untrustworthy in their history. How, then, are we to credit that documents assigned to a much earlier period are trustworthy?

One statement in Professor Sayce's paper we should directly challenge. He is reported as saying that the account of Cheder-Loamer's campaign has been confirmed by the cuneiform records of Babylonia. He must know how conjectural is the name upon which he builds his hypothesis. That the story of Cheder-Loamer, Handful of Sheaves, is mythical was well shown by "Chilperic" in the translation of Genesis xiv. which he recently contributed to the *Freethinker*.

Mary Townsend, the Peckham nun, charged with collecting funds for a non-existent Home at Herne Hill, has been sentenced to twelve months' hard labor. The Rev. C. J. Walls, at whose house the nun resided, appeared for the defence, and admitted that the same charges had been made against him. But, said this worthy minister of Christ, the Founder of Christianity had a similar experience, and "I, like him, paid no attention to unfounded charges." The jury added to their verdict of guilty against the woman a rider to the effect that the Rev. C. J. Walls ought to have been placed in the dock at the same time. The Judge hoped the Treasury would be made acquainted with the facts.

At Poona religious rivalry between Hindus and Moslems culminated in a riot. The Hindus, returning from their temple, persisted in playing and singing in front of a mosque. The Mahomedans sallied forth raising their war-cry, and a fierce fight ensued. Four thousand Hindus poured upon the scene and sacked the mosque, which they even attempted to burn. Nothing inflames the worst passions of a crowd more than the belief that they are fighting for their gods.

A trio of angels have been wafted to heaven from Montgomery, Alaska—Dan Washington, Porter Davis, and Charles Ezell, all negro murderers, who expiated their atrocious crimes on the gallows. Washington said: "Brethren, in fifteen minutes I'll be in Paradise with a long white robe on and golden slippers, a walking de golden streets. When you all comes, I'll meet you at de gate and carry you to de judgment seat." Porter Davis said: "I don't want to take up my time speaking. I am anxious to go to heaven. In a few minutes my soul will be there. You all mind the gospel and meet me there." Charles Ezell, a wife murderer, said: "I know I am saved. I am going to sit down by Jesus. I am a true born son of Jesus, and am going home. All of you, white and black, I don't care how big you is, I am better than you, 'cause in a little while I will take the sacrament in the city called Paradise. I see the pearly gates standing open for me." What rejoicing there must have been in heaven over the reception of these worthy companions of the patriarchs.

The advertisements in the Church papers let us see what Christian people really are. Thus a clergyman's family advertise in the *Church Times* for a Lady Governess for two children, who must send her photo. The munificent salary offered is £6. Another wants a General Servant, who must be a "Churchwoman, honest, and very clean. Wages £8."

The *English Churchman* is incensed at the use of incense, and calls Ritualism a baptised Paganism.

The missionary of the Protestant Mission of St. Barnabas, Blackburn, says that "in a certain church at Blackburn questions had been put to girls of fourteen and fifteen which it would be a disgrace to repeat." The statement is made in the *English Churchman* of Sept. 13.

The *Church Times* devotes an article to the *congé d'élire*, the liberty granted to the chapter of a diocese to elect a bishop after the said bishop has been nominated by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Crown. The *C. T.* professes to find a valuable privilege in this farce, and quotes, with approbation, Canon Bernard, who says: "We cannot tell of what importance it may be before long." The *C. T.*, and all Churchmen, know that they can have leave to elect their own bishops whenever they dissolve their connection with the State, and pay for their bishops themselves. Meantime it is a farce to find them congratulating themselves on the *congé d'élire*, when the chapter knows that it must, under penalties, ratify, within twelve days, the selection of the Crown, and solemnly declare that God has chosen the name selected by the Premier. The Church has never been known to refuse to follow the guidance of the State where pelf is at stake.

This 17th of September it is exactly five hundred years since the Jews were banished from France by King Charles VI. Regarded with horror, exposed to incessant exactions, the playthings of the avarice of princes, who drove them away

in order to seize their goods, and allowed them to return when they had gathered fresh; such was the lot of the ancient people under the three races who ruled France until, in 1394, Charles VI. issued the decree for their banishment, once for all. Though the richest sort returned, they were never able to get this decree reversed, or to establish themselves as citizens having rights. They were compelled to wear a yellow badge in front of them, and Philip the Hardy added to this a horn upon the head. To bathe in the Seine was punished with death; and, if one was sentenced to be hanged, it was always between two dogs. (Saint Foix.)

An amusing instance of a child's misconception of the words of a popular hymn occurred recently at a Sunday-school in Somersetshire. The teacher, turning to the girl at the head of the class—to whom was accorded the privilege of choosing the hymn to be sung before closing the school—asked: "What hymn would you like, Bessie?" "Please, sir," replied the girl, "the hymn about the little bear." "The little bear? What do you mean?" "Please, sir," was the answer, "the hymn that says 'Can a mother's tender care cease towards the child she bare?'"

Cardinal Gibbons, whose American admirers have put forward his claims to succeed to the Papacy, has been pronouncing a high eulogium on the present possessor, who, he says, has raised the moral, political, and spiritual power of Catholic Christendom, and is to be placed with the greatest popes. The Cardinalite will, however, not break through their rule of having an Italian for Pope, though Cardinal Rampolla stands the best chance, from the fact of his being an English-speaking Italian.

Ex-Governor St. John, of Kansas, having said that if he were "God Almighty for fifteen minutes he would wipe out the United States Senate," the *New York World* has been asking several New York notabilities what they would do if with the same powers for fifteen minutes. John Swinton, labor leader, says, "I would weep"; the inspector of police says, "I would go crazy." Another says he would get the reward offered for communicating with Mars; another that he would just go on where God left off and make his own hair grow. W. Q. Judge, the Theosophist, says he would produce the sixth race, "composed of glorious sages, knowing the real secrets of nature"—which, we suppose, includes the precipitation of Mahatma letters. One writer says he would give every man a chance to live his life over again; another that he would eliminate all selfishness; and yet another that he "would kill the devil."

The Report on Divorce, published by the Convocation of York, is in direct contradiction to that published some time ago by the Pan-Anglican Conference at Lambeth. The Lambeth Conference say: "There has always been a difference of opinion in the Church on the question whether our Lord meant to forbid marriage to the innocent party in a divorce for adultery." The York Committee say that this statement is "not true in fact, as in primitive times there was no such difference."

In the Middle Ages noxious animals were excommunicated. After all, this was not much more unreasonable than the divine command to punish animals given to Moses just after the Ten Commandments, Exodus xxi. 28, "If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit."

This was in accordance with ancient notions of punishment. Indeed, when a man did wrong his whole household and animals were made to suffer with him. Thus, in the case of Achan, Joshua vii. 24, not only Achan was stoned, but his sons, daughters, oxen, asses, and sheep were burned with fire.

The Rev. Dr. McConnell, of St. Peter's, Philadelphia, has been taken severely to task by his fellow sky-pilots for refusing to pray against the cholera, on the ground that the city was dirty. They point out that, if his principle were carried out, there would be no prayer against preventable evils, and man would have stepped into the vacant throne of God.

Some of the American Catholic papers acclaim the Higher Criticism as vindicating the Catholic position that the Bible is untrustworthy as a rule of faith. They will find the Higher Criticism very unsafe ground whereon to build the claims of the Church.

*Christian Thought* says the Higher Critics are not true Christians; "Pfleiderer and Harnack do not believe in the supernatural; Wellhausen declares himself a polytheist; Kuenen, so his biographer tells us, made it his purpose in life to strip Christianity of every remnant of supernaturalism, which means that Christ was not God, was not born of the Virgin, was not raised from the dead."

It is curious to note the way in which the Higher Criticism was anticipated by the Jewish Pantheist and Freethinker, Spinoza. He held that all the books from Genesis to Kings present a coherent history, which aims at describing the ancient Jewish history from the origin of the people to the first destruction of the city, and concludes that the author of all those books was one and the same, Ezra, but that Ezra was not the final redactor, but merely the collector of the material which was drawn from various sources, as is evident from the immense number of chronological discrepancies. Spinoza came to the conclusion that, before the time of the Maccabees, the canon of the Old Testament books did not yet exist, and that those which we have now were selected by the Pharisees of the Second Temple.

The Rev. Compton Reade, rector of Kenchester, writing in favor of religious education, says: "Agnosticism sits silent in church itself. Analyse the spiritual quality of those members of a congregation who have not yet reached the age of forty, and have also received an ordinary education. Arrive, if you can, at the inner mind of a London drawing-room. Test the average belief of a London club, of a bar, or military mess. Converse with a group of Balliol men, or medical, or law students. The optimism of theology will receive a rude disillusionment, and it will become only too apparent that the grandchildren of staunch Christians lack even the belief of honest doubt. They have parted company with the sheet-anchor of their ancestors." Mr. Compton Reade appeals to the Nonconformists to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

The Church has been well said to depend on living women, dead men, and absent gods. In America the Congregationalists and Presbyterians publish the statistics of their membership, and the proportion of women is double that of men. As an American parodist has it,

In the world's broad field of battle,  
In the bivouac of life,  
You will find the Christian soldier  
Represented by his wife.

Professor D. W. Simon, who teaches theology in the Congregational Theological Hall, Edinburgh, says that the *Christian World* is driving theology out of fashion among Congregationalists. He remarks that during the last thirty-five years only one "Systematic Theology" has been published by British Congregationalists; that out of some six hundred registered Congregational publications during, say, twenty-five years scarcely fifty are scientifically theological; and that out of upwards of four hundred and fifty discourses by Congregational ministers, printed during the last five years or thereabouts in the *Christian World Pulpit*, scarcely thirty were doctrinal.

Professor Simon further observes that on those theological subjects that are taken up—viz., Inspiration, the Atonement, and Future Punishment—most heretical views are held. There is also an amount of nebulosity, of sentimentality, sometimes bordering on the hysterical, of tenderness to sceptics and outsiders, conjoined with scathing severity towards assured believers and insiders, and of non-constructive criticism of orthodoxy, or what bears the name, that would make the fathers turn in their graves.

Half a century ago Puritan theology and even Calvinism held the field among the Congregationalists. Now the aspect has completely changed. Universalism is preached; Christ is being made all-in-all, and in some quarters, under cover of phrases like the "Divine Man," the humanity of Christ is overshadowing his divinity. In short, Professor Simon discerns everywhere signs of man climbing up and God crawling down. Upon which we think the Congregationalists and the *Christian World* are to be congratulated.

The Dean of Rochester is responsible for the story that, when a boy at a Church school was asked what sign Peter gave of repentance, he replied, "He crowed thrice."

The Catholic Church prohibits cremation in countries under its control, but permits it in India, an authority having been given to the Bishop of Vizagapatam to that effect.

Railway engineering in China is attended with unusual difficulties, owing to the superstitions of the Chinese. The expense of the first railway built in the country was increased greatly by the bounties demanded for the desecration of ancestral graves, many of which appeared suddenly in the most unusual localities. One man maintained that five of his mothers-in-law were buried on the line of the road, and, his demands having been satisfied, other claims followed to the same effect, so that mothers-in-law became one of the chief items of expense

In New York a fashionable church on a fashionable avenue tried the experiment of becoming a "people's church." The *Nation* remarks: "There was no lack of talent or enthusiasm or money on the part of those undertaking the movement; but the attempt to restore, on Madison-avenue, the idea of a church which St. James had, where the rich and poor would sit together, is now confessed to have been thoroughly unsuccessful. Mixing oil and water is as easy as mixing the classes in New York churches. The poor themselves do not want to go to the same church with the rich, and the rich do not really want them to come."

The Bishop of Manchester says that wealth is no good except to a man of high character. Hum! What a good opinion some people have of themselves!

The Salvationists having demonstrated the utility of brass in religion, we are not surprised to read of the formation of "A Church Orchestral Society, prepared to supply musicians for services in churches, on festivals, and other occasions." The Churches are beginning to see there is nothing like a brass band for raising the wind.

The Rev. Mr. Carlile, who has pushed himself and his Church Army into popularity by denouncing "Living Pictures" at Music Halls, goes in for a complete entertainment himself. He has a full orchestral band, and adopts gorgeous vestments and the aid of magic-lantern. Well, as the old Evangelical said, "The religion which fiddlesticks can create, fiddlesticks can destroy."

The *Weekly Register* announces that the faithful who wear "the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel" have been unconsciously defrauded of all benefits from wearing that mystical amulet, by not getting themselves registered. "Unfortunately, this essential condition for the valid reception of the scapular has, to a great extent, been ignored, or considered impossible of fulfilment, and neglected, thus depriving many pious souls of graces and privileges they fancied they enjoyed." Why "Our Lady" should withdraw her "graces" is not clear, supposing, that is, that she knows what her priests are doing; but one can see readily enough why the priests should "want to know."

Who says the days of miracles are over? Here is Mr. Stead claiming that he can get spirit information of what is going on abroad quicker than by telegraph; and here is the *Glasgow Observer* (Roman Catholic) which gives portraits of persons miraculously cured at the shrine of St. Winefride, Holywell. The priests vouch for the cures, and, in some cases, are backed up by the doctors. But the cases have all the air of the miracles of "Warner Safe Cure," or Mother Siegel's Syrup; and the Protestant world simply shrugs its shoulders.

*Le roi est mort! Vive le roi!* "A new black champion" is to the front—on the beach at Hastings. His name is Charles Higgins, and he proclaims himself the true and only original black champion. He lives by preaching the Gospel and selling a penny book with the title, *The Black Champion*, a phrase which appears to have caught on. We recommend Mr. Higgins to put himself into communication with that excellent and most teetotally-named Christian Evidence secretary, Mr. T. T. Waterman.

Dr. Fremantle, the Bishop of Ripon, does not agree with Mr. Gladstone that the Church of England stood in the way of the abolition of slavery. He actually says it was "abolished through the teaching of the Church of England"—a statement which the *Westminster Gazette* says "has been read with amazement by persons who are even cursorily acquainted with the leading facts of English history."

According to the *Pioneer*, an Indian journal, at a Methodist Episcopal Church service at Bangalore, on August 20, the Rev. Mr. Baker presiding, an elder announced that the Rev. Mr. Sorby had severed his connection with the Church owing to his having committed a great sin. The nature of the "great sin" is not disclosed. Perhaps it is better left to imagination.

Mr. F. R. Benson, having a company at the Grand Theatre, Hull, playing some of Shakespeare's dramas, sent out circulars by post to the local celebrities, amongst whom was the Rev. J. Hetherington, vicar of St. Peter's. This man of God wanted to know if Mr. Benson did this act in contempt of the minister's sacred calling, and invoked God's mercy on the wicked play-actor, so that he might "turn and flee from the wrath to come."

What is the difference between a Unitarian and a Universalist?—One thinks God too good to damn, and the other that man is too good to be damned.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 30, Plymouth.  
 October 7, 14, 21, Hall of Science, London; 28, Leicester; 29, Derby.  
 November 4, Manchester; 11, Birmingham.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—September 22 and 23, Sheffield; 28, York; 30, Dundee. October 3, 4, and 5, Aberdeen; 7, Edinburgh; 14, Glasgow; 21 and 22, 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.

STANLEY JONES.—The *Freethinker* office has for many months been changed from Clerkenwell-green. Pray do not send any more postcards there, as doing so causes delay and expense.

A. ADDY.—Thanks for the Barnsley Branch members' good wishes. Canon Driver's book on the Old Testament literature, or Donaldson's "Introduction," but both are expensive.

BURY.—Messrs. Slater & Co., Moorside, supply the *Freethinker*.

T. JOHNSON.—Mr. Forder can probably supply you with a copy of Dr. Hardwick's book. We think the price is 7s. 6d.

R. KILLICK.—Glad you are so pleased with the Second Series of *Flowers of Freethought*.

G. W. B.—We have read the enclosure with interest.

PLINY.—We attach no importance to the complaints of incompetent and disappointed men.

J. SAUNDERS.—See paragraph. Cuttings are always welcome.

G. FAULKNER.—Thanks for the trouble, all the same.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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—New York Truthseeker—La Verité—Progressive Thinker—Freedom—Für Unsere Jugend—Crescent—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—Echo—Zoophilist—Twentieth Century—Accrington Observer—Lucifer—Pioneer—Open Court—Post—Westminster Gazette—Hull Argus—Jarrow Guardian.

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, 1s. 6d.; 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 has returned home from his northern tour and his bit of holiday at the Isle of Man. His lectures at Dundee have already been noticed in these columns. He had capital audiences at Glasgow, and some discussion, chiefly conducted on the Christian side by a gentleman who exhausted the patience of his hearers. Mr. Forrester was absent from the meetings on account of ill-health, but we hope he has, by this time, completely recovered. Mr. Ferguson, the brave old newsagent, who went to prison some years ago rather than give up the sale of the *Freethinker*, is still to be found in his shop in Ingram-street, in spite of his patriarchal age.

Excellent meetings were held in the Oddfellows' Hall, Liverpool, on Sunday to hear Mr. Foote's lectures. The chair was taken in the afternoon by Mr. Ernest Newman, a writer in the *Free Review*, who is a valuable accession to the Liverpool Branch. We are glad to notice that the Branch is bent on doing a good winter's work, and has arranged for occasional lectures by outside Rationalists of some distinction.

Mr. Foote is not lecturing to-day (September 23). On Sunday next he delivers three lectures at Plymouth, which he has not visited for some years. On returning to London he will deliver a course of lectures at the Hall of Science, after which he will be for several weeks in the provinces.

Mr. Charles Watts had another large audience at the Hall of Science last Sunday evening, and it was evident, by the enthusiastic applause, that our colleague's answer to the question, "Why we should lead moral lives?" met with hearty approval. After the lecture Mr. Watts made an appeal to friends to take shares in the "National Secular Hall Society," as it is desirable to commence the contemplated extensive alterations and improvements as soon as possible.

Mr. Watts lectures on Saturday evening, September 22, and three times to-day (Sunday, September 23), at Sheffield. The lectures on Saturday and Sunday evenings will be delivered in the Music Hall, Surrey-street, and in the morning and afternoon in the Hall of Science, Rockingham-street. We hope the Yorkshire friends will muster in good force. The proceeds of the Saturday evening lecture will be given to the Hall of Science Renovation Fund.

Mr. Sam Standing reports that the new Secular Society formed at Rochdale will become a Branch of the N.S.S. The work of this Branch is to include a Clothing Club, a Temperance Society, a Sick Visiting Society, Debating and other classes, and, if possible, a Freethought Book Store.

Montreal boasts the Macdonald School or Institute of Mechanical Engineers, a splendidly appointed museum, presented to the city by Mr. Macdonald, a Freethought resident, two years ago. He made it a condition that no religious service or ceremony should at any time be permitted within its walls. Quite recently the United States Institute of Mechanical Engineers held its annual congress in the Macdonald Institute.

The Bristol Branch has another Sunday outing to-day (Sept. 23) to Brislington, starting at 2.30 from Shepherd's Hall. Members of this Branch able and willing to give a lecture during the winter are desired to let the secretary know as soon as possible.

Mr. Macgregor has brought before the New Zealand Parliament a new Divorce Bill to assimilate the law of the colony to that of Victoria, by which the sexes are placed on a footing of equality, instead of the wife being, as now, obliged to prove cruelty in addition. The other grounds for dissolving the marriage tie are wilful desertion for three years, habitual drunkenness, imprisonment for stated periods for criminal offences, and for certain assaults and bodily injuries inflicted upon the petitioner. The clergy are up in arms against the measure, which the Rev. G. MacMurray says "sets aside the law of God" and "strikes at the very root of Christianity." As, however, the New Zealand Parliament is decidedly anti-clerical, their raving will meet with little attention, the supporters of the Bill being able to cite the experience of Victoria as to the beneficial character of the Divorce Act.

Thus the Melbourne *Argus* says: "The operation during the past two years of the new divorce laws, as revealed from time to time by proceedings in the Supreme Court, is a distinct rebuke to ecclesiastical intolerance, and an equally emphatic triumph for practical common sense. No reasonable man can say that the effect of the Act has been to perceptibly lessen the sanctity of the marriage vow, or to undermine that family life which is well described as the foundation of the State. None of the mischiefs predicted by timorous sticklers for what Shakespeare calls 'a world-without end bargain' have so far appeared."

The Melbourne *Age* is equally emphatic, as follows: "Mr. Shiels has every reason to be satisfied with the working of the amended divorce law. One of the principal objects he had in view was to afford relief to a numerous class of unhappy women, who were wives merely in name, and yet were prohibited from honestly mating with a more desirable partner. The records of the Court show that the Act is proving an inimitable boon to the sufferers. . . . Whatever a section of the theologians may affirm, the moral conditions of the community must be improved, not injured, by permitting such women to rid themselves of the entanglements of a false relationship, and enter on a true one, if so disposed." Thus, while our Convocation of York is denouncing the little divorce permitted in England to the well-to-do, our colonies are congratulating themselves on having far greater freedom.

The Socialist and Radical parties in Brussels, being dissatisfied with the conduct of the old University, have resolved to establish a "New University of Brussels," which

will be opened for lectures on October 1. A faculty of theology will not be included.

Mr. C. C. Moore, editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, was prosecuted for blasphemy, having thrown ridicule on the Gospel story of the supernatural conception and birth of Jesus Christ. He pleaded that he had committed no offence against the laws of Kentucky, and Judge Parker has sustained his demurrer and dismissed the indictment. An appeal, however, has been granted, and presumably the case will be heard of again.

Judge Parker's decision is a noteworthy one. "In the code of laws," he said, "of a country enjoying absolute religious freedom there is no place for the common law crime of blasphemy. Unsuitable to the spirit of the age, its enforcement would be in contravention of the constitution of this State, and this crime must be considered a stranger to the laws of Kentucky."

A bust of the late Charles Bradlaugh has been presented to the Manchester Branch by an anonymous donor, and the unveiling is to take place on Wednesday evening next (Sept. 26) at 7.30. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner is to perform the unveiling ceremony, and Mr. G. W. Foote has promised to attend. Other persons have been invited, but up to the time of going to press we are not aware how many of them, if any, will be present. No doubt there will be a good muster of the South Lancashire admirers of "Thorough" on this occasion.

The *Isle of Man Times*, in noticing Mr. Foote's recent visit to Douglas, makes the following remark: "Some of our readers may have observed, from a recent correspondence in a local contemporary, in which Mr. Foote's views were adversely commented upon, that he then offered to publicly debate the question with any one of a standing in the Christian community, equal to that held by him among the Secularists. That offer, up to the present, has not been accepted. We understand, however, that Mr. Foote is still open for this public discussion, the only condition he makes being that the proceeds be given to some local charity."

Mr. Charles Watts is making all arrangements for his School Board candidature in Finsbury. His address to the electors, which was printed in last week's *Freethinker*, is being circulated in the constituency. Twenty thousand copies have been struck off for this purpose. Friends who can aid in the distribution are requested to apply for copies at 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C. Public meetings will be held in the constituency in October, of which due notice will be given by advertisement and otherwise.

Funds will of course be required for this fight, and we know the Secular party will respond to the appeal generously. The N.S.S. Executive long ago resolved to open a special subscription for this object, with Mr. George Ward, 91 Mildmay-park, London, N., as its treasurer. The following sums have already been received:—George Anderson, £5; J. Umpleby, £2; Samuel Seal, £2; F. Smallman, £1; T. R. Allinson, £1 1s.; Thomas Hayes, £1; R. Roberts, £1; Alfred Sumner, £1; H. C. Hiller, £1 1s.; General Forlong, 10s.; B. Nixon, £1 1s.; Clair J. Greece, LL.D., 10s. 6d.; Ahi, £1; A. W. Marks, 10s.; W. C. Johnson, 10s. 6d.; George Minson, 5s.

## CHIPS.

Men get a better living on their feet than on their knees.

You can do more good to man by kindness and help than by praying a thousand years.

Wordsworth hit it when he said:—

The primal duties shine aloft, like stars;  
The charities that soothe and heal and bless  
Are scattered at the feet of man like flowers;  
The generous inclination, the just rule,  
Kind wishes and good actions and pure thoughts—  
No mystery is here.

The Christian manner of using the idea of a hereafter is simply gambling in futures.

Human reverence demands an object, but scorns the holy things that the priest offers for our homage.

The religion that rejects God for man is the best religion on earth.

The quickest way and the surest way to make men better morally is to improve their worldly estate.

—*Boston Investigator*.

## A JAPANESE IDEA OF HEAVEN.

No country in the world does more to entertain its children than does Japan, says Miss White, a missionary. Even on the street-corners men stand, whose sole business it is to tell stories to the boys and girls. One day Miss White joined a group of little folks who were eagerly listening, and this was what she heard: "Once upon a time a peasant went to heaven, and the first thing he saw was a long shelf with something very strange-looking upon it. 'What is that?' he asked; 'is that something to make soup of?' (The Japanese are very fond of soup). 'No,' was the reply, 'those are ears. They belonged to people who, when they lived on earth, heard what they ought to do in order to be good, but paid no attention to it, so when they died their ears came to heaven, but the rest of their bodies could not.' After a while the peasant saw another shelf with queer things on it, and again he asked, 'Are they to make soup of?' 'No,' he was told, 'they are the tongues of men who told people how to be good, but who themselves never did as they told others to do, so when they died their tongues came to heaven, but the rest of their bodies could not.'" Miss White, no doubt, recognised the difficulty of teaching the absurd Christian ethics to people whose stories for children so greatly excel the ordinary orthodox ones as that cited above.

## THE BIBLE AND HUMANITY.

WIDTH of knowledge may, and does, destroy men's allegiance to the Bible, even while it enables them to understand it; but it can never destroy their allegiance to Humanity, for that allegiance is only another name for sympathies to which width of knowledge has given birth. The attitude of the present towards the past should be one of sympathy and compassion, but never one of obedience; and, great as is the spirit of the Bible, we do no dishonor to it in saying that humanity has got beyond its reach. Let us not be guilty of the scepticism which would confine the saving forces of the world to the intuitions of a particular people, or the exhortations of a particular book. The religious teaching of the future must be based, not on retrospective sympathies, but on the animating hopes and purposes of the modern world. It must express the iron necessities that encompass men about, with the energetic patience that conquers the law by accepting it. It must point to an ultimate object of action capable of being brought closer to men's hearts by the enlargement of feeling and the extension of thought, and it must correct and dignify daily life by exhibiting it as part of a universal life, as only a single link in an unending chain of being. The Bible cannot do these things, and the utmost dexterity of literary apology will be unable to restore to it its saving functions. We may recognise this fact, and preserve our faith in the redemption of human society notwithstanding.—*M. M. Strickland*.

## Clerical.

An American paper reports that a minister in Cleveland rode to church the other Sabbath on a bicycle. As he swept up to the sacred edifice, a large Newfoundland dog, belonging to the senior deacon, came lumbering out to greet the pastor. The bicycle struck the dog on the head under a full head of steam, and run him down with a shock that could be plainly felt with the naked eye. The reverend gentleman took a header, and jammed his silk hat down over his ears so tight, that he had to crawl through it to get out of it. The scattered leaves of a "seven-headed sermon" flew around the avenue like a theological snowstorm.

The dog made Rome howl with his wails, and attracted a crowd of three hundred people. The parson's coat was split down the back, and his trousers ripped across the knees. He pinned up the knees, and had to wear a pepper-and-salt sack-coat the sexton loaned him. When he appeared in the pulpit in this garb the congregation smiled, and when he announced his text, 2 Kings xii. 6—"But it was so . . . . the priest had not repaired the breeches—," there wasn't a dry eye in the conventicle.

A MIDDLE-CLASS FAITH.—The Christian religion is professed, its representatives are quite sufficiently honored, its doctrines are not generally denied; but it is not the religion of the English people. It is the religion of sections of the people, especially certain sections of the middle class. But the doctrines of Christianity have not a vital hold of the mind; the principles of Christianity do not actually direct the life of the English people.—*London Quarterly Review*, July, 1894, p. 337.

## ENOCH, MELCHIZEDEK, AND JESUS CHRIST: ANOTHER HOLY TRINITY.

Most people will agree that a full and just conception of Christian theology cannot be obtained without a special adaptability, a powerful faculty for grasping multifarious theories and assumptions. The road to heaven has not yet been made so clear and plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein; the difficulty being that many anxious Christians are beset with bewildering doubts as to the safety of the particular course they are travelling. The battling sects, despite the talk of prospective reunion, are unceasingly wrangling over the right route, each one of them claiming the distinction of its monopoly: a state of affairs which comes, perhaps, of revealing the truth to babes and sucklings, and withholding it from the members of the churches. There is evidence of the uncertainty of the path of salvation in the fact that religious people maintain and compel, by intolerant domination, irreligious people to assist in supporting a large army of professors, whose business it is to explain and illustrate (and pervert, one might add) the works and teachings of their redeemer. The intricate and complex nature of the creed is a matter of mutual acknowledgment, and it is said that a supernatural perception, known as spiritual insight, is necessary to enable a proper comprehension of its bearings and meanings. If this be so—and we are not going to dispute it—then it is likely that a comparatively small number of the human race will reap the blessings of a knowledge of these hidden truths. Free-thinkers should be profoundly grateful that they have hitherto failed to discover the spiritual part of themselves, for they are being spared a terrible ordeal, that of endeavoring to fathom the foggy credentials of Christian doctrines; and now that those mysteries are being doubly confounded by the interpolated speculations of neologists, their exemption from care must oftentimes excite the enviable feelings of their orthodox friends.

One of the latest additions to the variegated gamut of beliefs, fancies, and fads associated with religion is a proposition advanced and advocated by a gentleman of the name of Murray,\* who has thereby atoned for any previous lack of enthusiasm and energy on behalf of the faith. The novel and sensational character of his argument is one of its chief recommendations for attention. He states his belief, and is professedly proud of its authorship, that Jesus Christ was no other a person than Melchizedek, the king of Salem, that human conundrum who was without father or mother, and that Melchizedek was the man Enoch, of whom it is written: "He was not, for God took him." The two incarnations here involved are sought to be justified by the following reasonings and assumptions. With regard to the first, it is pointed out that Enoch was treated by God, in degree, as a familiar friend; that he was "taken in life into God's rest as God's son" when he was 365 years old, and that "Melchizedek was sent upon this earth again to build God's altar and sign in this new world—the great masonic temple of the Lord, the great Pyramid of Gizeh." The testimony which this bears to the builders' personality is to be seen in "the sign on one side of its base being the length of the year-day, 365, the age of its builder, Enoch, when God took him to his heavenly rest more than 1,504 years before." Mr. Murray argues that Melchizedek could not be taken for an ordinary human being, and that he was sent direct from heaven as God's messenger. "When this Melchizedek, high priest of God, meets with Abram, he conveys to him bread and wine, and blesses him. St. Paul tells us that the lesser must be blessed by the greater; therefore, Abram, who is called righteous, and God's friend, must have been less than Melchizedek."

In support of the contention that Melchizedek was again incarnated in the form of man, this time in the person of Jesus, several passages are quoted from the New Testament, such as the following: "He came, then, to renew his inheritance as the king of Zion and Salem." "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek"; "called of God a high priest, after the order of Melchizedek." As Melchizedek sanctified Abram, then, without seed, so did Jesus come in later days to bless and sanctify the same seed, by the offering to God of his body. It is shown that the divine attributes of Melchizedek and Jesus Christ are identical, and then it is asked, "Who else could he (Melchizedek) be but our universal savior, for whom the Bible prepares us? For observe, unless we make the two divine men, who came of God, one and indivisible, we raise up confusion in the sacred harmony of God's word, the Holy Bible, which is an impossibility." Mr. Murray trusts to have proved that "Enoch came from God as Melchizedek to bless Abram, the father of the chosen seed, once, and again as Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior, to save that seed from death for ever and ever, and to dwell with us in righteousness as the glorious and everlasting King of this

earth under our just and merciful God Almighty"; also that his "brothers of Great Britain and the United States" will spare him reproaches for "intentional neglect of proof." It may fare rather bad with Mr. Murray if his friends are not as magnanimous as desired.

Few people, excepting the interested and self-constituted watch-dogs of theology, need feel any trepidation in the promulgation of this doctrinal innovation; it is a matter which the Churches may be left to oppose or accept, as they think best. Certainly there will be a little natural curiosity as to how the "sacred harmony of God's Word" is to remain intact, or, rather, how its heterogeneous and conflicting elements are to be moulded into unison and agreement. The tendency of the new idea under notice, however, strikes one as working towards an opposite direction, to the breaking up into more numerous fragments the already shattered form of Christianity, and to the sowing of fresh seeds of dissension where confusion is still so prevalent. Not content with the division of their God into three, there must needs be now a subdivision, a dissection of the parts, the first to undergo the process being Jesus Christ. If Jesus, Melchizedek, and Enoch are to compose a second holy trinity, a slight variation of the Athanasian Creed may be anticipated, whereby the faithful may recite, "We worship one savior in trinity in unity; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of Jesus, another of Melchizedek, and another of Enoch; Jesus uncreate, Melchizedek uncreate, and Enoch uncreate; Jesus incomprehensible, Melchizedek incomprehensible, and Enoch incomprehensible; Jesus eternal, Melchizedek eternal, and Enoch eternal; and yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal, as also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible." Such a terrible prospect, Christian people may be glad to hear, is perhaps removed from probable actuality by the fact that the originator of this novel belief is one of those cranks whose particular hobby is the subject of the "Lost Ten Tribes." Any idiosyncrasy will be excused when this mental weakness is made known.

FRED WILSON.

## DOWN WITH THE BARRIERS.

BREAK, break, break!

The idols of wood and stone,  
Idols that for countless years,  
Dyed with blood and wet with tears,  
Have fostered superstition's fears,  
And made the soul their own.

Break, break, break!

The fetters of the mind,  
Fetters forged by priest and knave—  
Not to help and not to save;  
Forged to make mankind their slave,  
To plunder while they bind.

Break, break, break!

The Bible's cruel spell,  
Blasting childhood's priceless hours  
With phantoms of infernal powers,  
And casting o'er this world of flowers  
The blighting glare of Hell.

Break, break, break!

Convention's rusting chain—  
Support of all whose base desire  
To live in sloth on others' hire  
Has trampled Labor in the mire  
Of poverty and pain.

Break, break, break!

The sword with carnage red,  
So cruel Hate shall hide her face  
Of man for man and race for race,  
Till all are brothers, and her place  
Is filled by love instead.

Break, break, break!

Each one a hand may lend—  
The power of mitre, sword, and crown.  
Let bigots shriek and tyrants frown;  
Break, break the bars to Freedom down,  
And hasten on the end.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

"Papa," asked Tommy Goodman, "who was Cain's wife?" "Caroline," said Rev. Dr. Goodman, after an ominous pause, addressing his wife, "will you please hand me my heaviest slipper and leave the room? There is going to be a trial for heresy right here and right now."

\* *Who was Enoch, and What has He Become?* A sixpenny pamphlet, by A. C. Murray.

## RUSSIAN SECTS.

ALTHOUGH the population of Russia is usually set down as of the State religion, the orthodox Greek Church, a large number of the masses as distinct from the classes are broken up in numerous dissenting bodies known as Raskolniks. Not a few of these sectarians are of a mystical turn. Some of them believe in present-day inspiration. The most important of these sects are the Chlysty, or Flagellants, and the Skopky. The former call themselves the "Godmen." Their first prophet said of himself, "I am the God predicted by the prophets, and have descended for a second time upon the earth for the deliverance of men; besides me there is no God." This incarnation of the God-Father was a certain Daniel Philippowitz. After him appeared a series of saviors, all incarnations of God. The first of these was the "Savior," Ivan Suslow. Faith in such inspiration, and the preservation of their secrets, are the chief characteristics of this sect. Officially, they yet belong to the State Church. In their services, song and dance and ecstatic excitement play a prominent rôle. These do not cease until the participants sink to the ground from exhaustion. Then follow prophecies in short, broken sentences.

The Chlysty are divided into separate sections called "ships." Each "ship" has its prophets and prophetesses, whose inspiration is law for the congregation. As a rule, each "ship" has its own "Savior" and "Mother of God"; the latter consisting generally of young men especially gifted for ecstatic exhibitions. Occasionally these services degenerate into orgies among the Chlysty. As Pascal says, "There is but one step from the angel to the beast."

A shameless mysticism is represented by the sect called "Jumpers," which seems to be of Occidental origin. Not a few of the Chlysty seem to unite bloody rites with voluptuous ones. What the fathers said concerning the Eucharist celebrations of the Montanists, and the pagans said of the primitive Christians, seems to be true of these also. However, there are a number of sensual and voluptuous cultus which are of purely Russian origin. The adherents are called *Skopky*, or "white doves." They are not pessimists, but mysticists, and make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. They appeal to Matt. xix. 12; xviii. 8, 9. They are widely spread, and practise a successful propaganda. The organiser was Eunuch Christ, or Saliwanus, who died in 1832. Among the other curious sects are the Malokamians, or Milkdrinkers. They call themselves the "Spiritual Christians," and despise all traditional cultus formulas. They are the real representatives of the reaction against the formalism of the State Church. They acknowledge only the universal priesthood of the believers, and accept no special priest-class. Elders conduct their worship. They aim to worship God in spirit; have no churches, or chapels, or pictures, claiming that the only true temple of God is the human heart. Their whole services consist in reading the Scriptures, repeating the Lord's Prayer, and singing the Psalms. They allegorise the Sacraments, reject baptism by water, and regard the Lord's Supper as a memorial feast. In fact, the Skopky are probably the nearest approach to the primitive Christians now extant.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* recently told of another sect known as the Underground People. According to these benighted but well-meaning persons, the one thing needful to salvation is to make as many underground cellars, corridors, and secret hiding-places as possible, and to conceal therein all sorts and conditions of men, who happen to be fleeing from justice or eluding the pursuit of the authorities—deserters, or the passportless, or runaways from Siberia. This looks as if the new community were a political society rather than a religious body; but, in reality, nothing is further removed from the true state of things. The "Underground People" have no political convictions; they are solicitous only for the salvation of their souls, and are in such terrible earnest about this all-important business of their earthly pilgrimage that most of them literally lay down their lives in the hope of finding them in the next world. How it is done is this: As soon as a man, woman, or child falls ill, and is compelled to take to his or her bed, the Elders are sent for. These peasants, who are unable to read or write, meet in the hut of the patient, and, having offered up a short prayer, solemnly announce that the Lord's call must be answered in a spirit of true resignation. Then the sick person is baptised anew, receiving a wholly different name, to which the epithet "Servant of God" must invariably be added. The sectarians explain this rule by saying that, if Ivan or Peter died with his old name, he would stand before the Judgment Seat of God saturated with sin and infamy, and would be hurled into hell without pity or ruth. But when he has received his new cognomen he need fear nothing, for the devils will hunt for Ivan or Peter, the hardened sinner, whereas his name has become, say Anthony or Alexander, the Servant of God; so that, as they will never succeed in establishing his identity, he is perfectly sure of being admitted into the kingdom of heaven.

## BOOK CHAT.

MR. CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, himself a Massachusetts man, in his *Massachusetts: Its Historians and its History*, reveals the religious bigotry of the Puritans. "This inexcusable intolerance," he says, "led to a theologico-glacial period from 1637 till 1761," when Paine had visited America. Under the chilling influence of this period, art was nowhere, and mental activity dwindled, showing only the works of Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards—"huge literary boulders deposited by the receding ice." The religious system of Edwards—of which his overwrought picturings of future sufferings are the only feature which impresses Mr. Adams—is the characteristic "outcome of his environment." The system of reasoning on which the theology of this glacial period was built up, "by putting a final stop to any intellectual movement, created a universal paralysis—this system had to be slowly outgrown." These "Calvinistic, orthodox tenets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries constituted nothing more nor less than an outrage on human nature, productive in all probability of no beneficial results whatever." On the contrary, they led to "phases of acute mania," of which the witchcraft delusion of 1691-92 and the "Great Awakening" of 1734-44 were the natural manifestations. Altogether, Mr. Adams rather confirms the jokist who declared it would have been well if, instead of the Pilgrim Fathers landing on Plymouth Rock, Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers.

\* \* \*

Graf Paul von Hoensbroech, whose defection from the order of Jesuits made some sensation in Germany a year ago, is publishing a volume on the subject of Modern Jesuitism, which, he says, is everywhere bent on bringing the State into subordination to the Church, replacing civil law by canonical law, and controlling the press by ecclesiastical censure.

\* \* \*

With regard to the conscience of the Jesuits, Graf Hoensbroech has this to say: "Certain easy excuses and mental reservations are used by most men at times to quiet their consciences; but Jesuitism educates men to adopt such excuses for all transactions during life; it teaches untruth systematically. There is an air of falsity and deceit about the order which depressed me continually; the lying answers in Gury's *Moral Theology* are perfectly natural to, and consistent with, Jesuitism."

\* \* \*

A finely-illustrated work is *Les Démoniaques dans l'Art*, by the late Dr. J. M. Charcot and Paul Richer. It should do something to dispel the New Testament superstition of possession by devils. The authors have reproduced some of the most mediæval pictures of casting out devils. Their convulsions are almost the same as those of our modern "hystericals." And as nervous hysteria is now known not to be confined to women, but that men also are subject to it, although under a slightly different form, we must come to the conclusion that our ancestors mistook convulsions for the acts of evil spirits.

\* \* \*

In Mr. B. Douglas Howard's book on *Life with Trans-Siberian Savages*, he describes how the Sakhalien Ainos, among whom no Christian missionaries have ever been, make a chip of wood, which they lay in the north-eastern corner of every hut, and before which, upon every occasion of joy and sorrow, they prostrate themselves. Mr. Howard points out that the icon, or image of the saint in Russian houses, is placed in the same position, and for the same purpose. Another instance of how much of Christianity is modified Paganism.

\* \* \*

One of the most popular works among the German Anti-Semitic party is a book by H. Naudh (or rather Nordmann), entitled *Die Juden und der Deutsche Staat*. It has gone through eleven editions. Naudh finds, in the Old Testament, the explanation for all the faults of the Jews of to-day. Jehovah is for him "the mirror of the Jewish conscience"; the patriarchs, and especially juggling Jacob, are "typical illustrations of the Jewish character." God is represented as having made man in His image—*i.e.*, as having created Jews, and these He is compelled to destroy, indicating the character of this people. Jehovah and Moses are represented as males; therefore, according to the Old Testament, women are deprived of their natural rights. She is the property of her husband. Jehovah is declared to be the willing helper in stealing and cheating. He tells the Jews to borrow, not meaning to return, and thus "spoil the Egyptians."

\* \* \*

According to Naudh, Christianity originally had little to do with Judaism. It developed out of Buddhism, and Jesus, as was the case also with John the Baptist, was a Buddhist monk. The New Testament, which is silent on

this subject now, has been falsified by the Jews. The only Christ that Germans should acknowledge is an Aryan Christ.

Now let us note the other side of the Jew question. Signor Cesare Lombroso, himself of Jewish birth, has, in his *Genio e follia*, collected a list of Jews who have led the way in medicine and physiology, and Mr. Joseph Jacobs has collected facts to show that the seven million Jews in Europe have produced, proportionally, far more eminent men than the three hundred million of Christians. No doubt the Jews are an old race, and persecution has weeded out nearly all but the clever long-headed ones. But they have, of course, the defects of their qualities.

The Lounger, in the *Critic* (New York), has this thrust at some unnamed author:—A well-known writer of humorous prose and verse was talking with a bibliomaniac a day or two ago, when the latter said: "By the way, I am collecting first editions of American authors. I want to add your first book to my collection. Have you any copies of the first edition?" "Yes," answered the author, "I have all of them."

*The Workers' School Board Program*, published by the Fabian Society, 276 Strand (1d.), is a thoughtful, well-drawn-up document, which will doubtless command a large sale before the coming election.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### PAPAL CLAIMS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A somewhat lively discussion has passed through the columns of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* during the last few weeks, occasioned by the Roman Catholic Jubilee, which has been celebrated in that city. In the brief letter which I contributed to that discussion I pointed out that the infallibility of the Pope and that of the Bible are alike indefensible. The text of the New Testament being uncertain, unixed, unsettled, and therefore unreliable, an infallible interpretation, either by the Pope or anyone else, is simply impossible. A correspondent who answered me in the interests of the Romanists, and who either misunderstood me or wilfully misrepresented my meaning, intimated that I wanted to debar them from appealing to the scriptures in confirmation of their position. Now what I really wanted to do was, not to shut them out from the Bible, but to show that any appeal to that source could afford them no help. The Bible itself being very unreliable, any theory drawn therefrom, any theology built thereon, cannot command a very large share of our confidence. The apostolic writings are lost, and we cannot therefore determine whether the copies we possess are faithful transcripts of them or not; and, not being sure of what the apostles wrote, we cannot be sure of what they believed and taught; and the Pope himself cannot help us in this matter.

Now, in the face of this, is it not absurd beyond absurdity to hold such a belief as that of the infallibility of the Roman see? One thing is certain: if the infallibility is to be accepted, reason must be silenced. If Rome is to say it is so, and we are to accept her dictum with unquestioning submission, then she may pass for infallible. But if we are to examine, reason, scrutinise her claims, investigate the book, compare the spiritual deliverances of the popes with common-sense, with facts, with evidence, then we shall find it, I think, impossible to put our neck into her yoke, and bow the knee to her despotic throne. Popery and reason are two opposites, and whichever happens to be the stronger will decidedly displace the other. All religious systems are more or less tyrannical, exclusive, and intolerant, but popery more so than them all. It exalts a man to a place of supreme power, places at his disposal the beliefs, religious acts, and convictions of others, and even invests him with power to dispose of their lives; and that is a great evil, as history abundantly testifies.

Now, no man with any culture, independent thought, and the courage of his convictions will submit his conscience and conduct to the supervision and control of any man, or court, or assembly, or body canonical, whatever may be their claims. Every man is his own property, and is at his own disposal. But this conflicts with all popish teaching, and there is a great deal of popery outside the Roman Church. The religious method is—including all popes—to set up a standard—whether it be the Romanist's infallible man, or the Protestant's infallible book—and to announce to the world, "If ye believe not this, ye are damned." Against this there is no appeal. Reason is put out of court. To the dictum of the Pope you must bow, and ask no questions, for conscience' sake.

What, then, is our conclusion? Simply this: The Bible is unreliable, and so must all teaching be which is drawn from it. There being no infallible rule of faith, there can be no infallible Church, no infallible "teaching office," no infallible pope.

HENRY BLAKEY.

## PROFANE JOKES.

An old Spanish proverb says: "Mankind is an ass, who kicks those who endeavor to take off his panniers."

"And are you really so badly broke, my friend?" he said, as he tendered the tramp a penny. "Broke?" was the bitter response. "I'm as badly broken as the Ten Commandments."

"If you have any last wish," said the priest to the convicted man on the scaffold, "tell me, and I will try to carry it out." "Yes," replied the poor wretch, "I want to learn to play the piano."

A small young curate rebuked a lady, conspicuous for her good deeds among the poor and outcast, with the words: "You're a good woman, but why don't you do some really religious work, such as embroidering an altar cloth?"

St. Peter: "Where are you from?" "From London." "What was your business?" "I was an editor." "Did you ever give tips on a sporting paper?" "No." "Did you ever write an advertisement puff?" "Believe me, no." "Did you ever refuse to return rejected manuscripts?" "Never; I was always most careful about that." "All right. What size crown do you take?"

### Miracles made Easy.

To turn water into wine—dilute your claret.

To raise the dead—join a resurrectionist party of medical students.

To make the deaf hear—make a disparaging remark about him in his presence.

To make the lame walk—take him to the theatre, and get some fool in the gallery to yell "fire."

To make the blind see—let him fall on the ice with full force on the back of his head. He will immediately see stars.

### Christian Hatred.

The *American Israelite*, Cincinnati, presents a startling picture of Christian Europe in these words: "Russia hates and persecutes all foreigners, Jews, and dissenters. In Austria, German, Czech, Magyar, Slav, and half a dozen more races hate and ostracise one another, with an occasional thrust at the Jew. Germany hates all her neighbors, Danes, Dutch, French, Poles, and Czechs persecuting in turn all those nationalities; and the Jews at all times. The French and the British are just a shade better than the others, but hate each other instinctively. The same is the case in Italy and Spain. Here is a sample of the 'religion of love,' preached now for so many centuries. . . . Most of the nations in Christendom are engaged in warfare or persecution. This is lamentable, but the race-pretensions, haughtiness, and self-aggrandisement is ridiculous besides, and yet it is common to all. It shows 'what fools these mortals be.'"

### Obituary.

MR. MICHAEL HYNES, an old Liverpool Freethinker, died at New Brighton on the 11th inst., and was buried at Smith-down-road Cemetery, Liverpool, on the 14th, in the presence of a large number of friends, many of whom were office-bearers in the masonic body, the deceased being a member of two lodges. Mr. Hynes was better known to the older school of Freethinkers, he having, of recent years, taken a less active part than formerly in the movement; but he was always ready to give practical expression to his desire for mental emancipation. For some time past deceased suffered from a most painful complaint, which he knew would end fatally; yet he bore his sufferings with the utmost fortitude; and, about a week before his death, knowing he was about to obtain the only possible relief, he caused an intimation to be conveyed to the Branch that he unwaveringly held the principles which had guided him for so many years of his life. Mr. Hynes was a man of some attainments; he possessed an excellent library, of which he was justly proud, and had figured to some extent as a pamphleteer. Originally a journeyman printer, he had for many years carried on a printing business at Thomas-street, Liverpool. Since the death of his wife, which occurred a couple of years ago, he disposed of his business to a limited company, failing health incapacitating him from active business pursuits.

**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, Touzeau Parris, "The Christian Uses of Ignorance." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, R. E. Dell (Fabian), "Liberalism and Labor." 9.15, social club. Tuesday, at 8.30, dancing class. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. J. Hunt, "Modern Religion."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.15, S. E. Easton, "Prayer."  
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, St. John will lecture.  
CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Inquisition."

DEPTFORD (Broadway): 7, A. G. Herzfeld, "By their Fruits Shall ye Know Them."

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "The Consolation of Philosophy."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11, a lecture; 3, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Thomas Paine." Thursday, at 8, St. John, "The World Without a God."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Rowney, "Holy Moses & Co.," 3.30, J. Rowney, "Prophecy." Wednesday, at 8, St. John, "Christianity and Slavery." Friday, Sept. 21, at 8, Messrs. Rowney and Connolly continue debate, "Charles Bradlaugh a Greater Man than Jesus Christ."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, J. Fagan, "Miracles."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3, debate between S. Hale and G. Coombe, "Is Christianity Superior to Secularism?"

LEYTON (High-road, near Vicarage-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Christ and his Teachings."

MILE-END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The French Revolution and Atheism."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester-gate): 3, A. Goodrich will lecture.

TOTTENHAM (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, T. May, "The Judgment Day."

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

WALTHAMSTOW (Markhouse-road): 6.30, W. Heaford, "Christian Evidences"

WESTMINSTER (Old Pimlico Pier): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Jesus and Paul."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, H. Snell, "If Christ Came to London"; 7, C. James, "Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

**COUNTRY.**

BRISTOL (Shepherd's Hall): 2.30, meet for ramble to Brislington.

DERBY (Friar Gate Coffee Tavern): Monday, at 7.30, Mr. Dean will give a reading.

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Ward will give a reading.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Taylor, "Intellectual Liberty and the Blasphemy Laws."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3.30, members' half yearly meeting; 6.30, T. Cook, "The Evils of the Present Land System, and its Remedy."

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday and Saturday, at 8, dancing.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King-street): 6.30, ethical class; 7.30, business meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Saturday, at 8 (in the Music Hall, Surrey-street), Charles Watts, "The Fallacy of the Doctrine of the Atonement: a Reply to Mr. Gladstone."

Sunday (in the Hall of Science) at 11, "New Tactics for Christians"; 3, "Secularism and Social Progress: Socialism, Individualism, and Anarchism"; 7 (in the Music Hall, Surrey-street), "Why Should we Live Moral Lives?—A Secularist's Answer."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street): 7, The Secretary, "The Gospel of Atheism."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

BARNSELY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "The House of Lords and Popular Liberty"; 6.30, "The Gospel and its Witnesses."

HEYWOOD (Market Ground): Thursday, 7, Sam Standing, "The Historical Untruth of the Old Testament."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell, "The Life of Abraham."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall-square): 11, Sam Standing, "The Cost of Modern Armies"; 3, "Creation Visualised—Day V.," 6.30, "Who is my Neighbor?" Tuesday, at 7, "The Re-union of Christendom."

SUNDERLAND (Ryhope Green): 11, The Secretary, "Secularism Defined and Defended."

**Lecturers' Engagements.**

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

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 23, Edinburgh; 30, Glasgow. October 7, Belfast; 14, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 21, Huddersfield; 28, Sheffield. November 4, Failsforth; 11, Hull; 18, Leicester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 41 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 23, Westminster. October 14, Camberwell.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—September 23, Hall of Science, London. October 7, Leicester.

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