

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

BRADLAUGH'S BUST.

It is well that posterity should be able to look upon the "counterfeit presentment" of our great men. Personality counts for so much, and personality is so largely revealed in bodily presence. Socrates is said to have been ugly, but it must have been a distinguished ugliness. There is a truth in Spenser's line :

For soul is form and doth the body make.

Certain physical characteristics go with certain moral and æsthetical qualities ; and, on the other side, there is a physical expression of the emotions—as Darwin called it—which in the course of time leaves permanent traces on the features, and in the very gestures and carriage of the body. So the brain, which we cannot see, helps to mould the body which we do see ; and so the body becomes symbolic of the inner man. This is a truth which we recognise instinctively. Hence the fascination of fine portraits and busts, and even the interest we feel in turning over an album of photographs.

Charles Bradlaugh was a remarkable man, and a remarkable looking man. He was worth seeing when alive, and his portrait is worth seeing now he is dead, though we do not know of one that does him justice. Mr. Walter Seckert has painted a picture of him, standing at the bar of the House of Commons, and pleading for the constitutional law of England. It is a good picture, but it does not convey the full massiveness of Bradlaugh's head or body. Painting a man after he is dead is too much an effort of imagination ; and, alas, no artist, while Bradlaugh was living, seized the opportunity of fixing upon canvas the living likeness of one of the most striking and original figures of our age.

Mr. Seckert's picture of Bradlaugh hangs in the Secular Hall, Manchester. It was presented to the institution by a generous friend of the Secular movement who desires to remain anonymous. This gentleman has more recently presented a fine bust of Bradlaugh to the same institution. It is the work of Mr. George Holding, and it has been a labor of love. Mr. Holding is himself an uncompromising Freethinker, and the son of a sturdy, veteran Freethinker, Mr. John Holding, who has for more than a generation been an ardent friend of the Secular cause in Manchester. The donor believes that Mr. Holding has produced a work of art of the very highest quality ; and, when the bust was unveiled, the meeting appeared to share this opinion.

The unveiling of this bust took place, most appropriately, on Wednesday evening, September 26. Several persons who had been invited to attend the ceremony were unable to be present. Mr. Robert Blatchford—"Nunquam" of the *Clarion*—was away in Wales ; Mr. Charles Watts was engaged in London ; Mr. Robert Forder was suffering from a cold ; and Mr. Labouchere was on the continent. Sir Henry Roscoe sent the following letter :—

"Had it been possible, I should have had pleasure in showing my respect for Mr. Bradlaugh's memory by being present on September 26, as you kindly suggest. As I cannot take part in the proceedings, I may add that, whilst not sharing all Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions, I entertained a high regard for his ability and character, and that I consider his untimely death to have been a grave national loss."

Mr. G. W. Foote, who presided at the unveiling, delivered a lengthy speech, which was listened to with
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rapt attention and very warmly applauded. The great distinctive feature of Charles Bradlaugh's life was its heroism—a quality that was so extremely rare in public men. He was an indubitable *man*. He was true to his motto of "Thorough," which is rightly inscribed upon his tomb. That motto had been first used by the great Earl Strafford, a dark and sinister figure in the troubled time that preceded the English Rebellion. Strafford was a man of consummate abilities, but he was "thorough" only in political wickedness. Bradlaugh adopted the motto and redeemed it. He was "thorough" in thought, thorough in speech, thorough in action, and thorough in loyal service to humanity.

Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner followed, and naturally met with an enthusiastic reception. She spoke very touchingly of the evidences she had found amongst her father's papers of his scheming and planning for all sorts of good public work. It delighted her to find, in an age when men are so soon forgotten, that her father's memory was still fresh in the hearts of thousands. His old motto of "thorough" was suggested by Thomas Allsop. He always liked to see it displayed by his friends, and hoped he would earn the right to have it inscribed upon his tomb, as indeed he had. Mrs. Bonner then pulled away the drapery which had hidden the bust, and disclosed a beautiful work of art that was greeted with loud acclamation.

Dr. Pankhurst was the next speaker. He said he was there to perform a simple duty. He had the greatest possible admiration for Charles Bradlaugh, who, as Mr. Foote had so truly said, was distinguished among all his contemporaries for heroism. He was a great man, cast in an heroic mould ; you might put him beside the Greek and Roman heroes of Plutarch, and feel that he was of the same contexture and substance with them. Dr. Pankhurst's eulogium of Bradlaugh was marked by a fine choice of words, and a sincere and passionate delivery ; and his peroration was warmly applauded.

Mr. Winks, who happened to be in the meeting, was invited to address the assembly, which he did with brevity and tastefulness. Mr. George Mason responded to a similar appeal, and bore testimony to Bradlaugh's hostility to all forms of priestcraft. Mr. Taylor referred to Bradlaugh's efforts to abolish the infamous Blasphemy Laws, and to the extraordinary way in which he overwhelmed his opponents at public meetings. Mrs. Pankhurst, who arrived late, having been detained at a meeting in connection with the coming School Board elections, is a lady whom the meeting would have gladly heard at greater length. Her voice is musical, and her elocution is perfect. We earnestly hope she will gain a seat on the Manchester School Board. She joined her husband in honoring the name of Charles Bradlaugh.

Mrs. Bonner added a few words to her former little speech, and told an interesting story of a London cabman. A lady friend of hers visited his house in the wake of the doctor. His child was suffering, and he was very taciturn. But the lady noticed a portrait of Bradlaugh over the mantelpiece, and she thawed him out by talking of the man's hero. Yes, he knew Bradlaugh, and had often driven him. Some cabmen would not take the fare from Bradlaugh, but he did not like to refuse it. However, he never spent the money that Bradlaugh paid him on himself or his family. He looked upon it as sacred, and always spent it on some good cause. In the same way, Mrs. Bonner hoped, if any of those present had derived any

good from her father, they would not keep it to themselves, but pass it on to others.

Mr. Foote then wound up the speech-making, and the proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to the chair, which was moved in handsome terms by Dr. Pankhurst. People then crowded on the platform to get a nearer view of the bust. Some said "It isn't equal to the original," but all seemed to think it excellent. It is to be hoped that diminished copies of it will be placed upon the market at a reasonable price. We should say that they would be bought up eagerly by Bradlaugh's admirers. Meanwhile we advise any of our readers who may be going to Manchester to pay a visit to the Secular Hall, which contains Mr. Seekert's picture and Mr. Holding's bust of "Thorough." And after looking at these two works of art, we hope they will remember the donor, without whose generosity neither picture nor bust would be there. They can feel thankful without knowing his name.

G. W. FOOTE.

A PRIEST ON AGNOSTICISM.

I AM one of those who regard the Catholic Church as still the most dangerous enemy of Freethought. It is true the tiger is chained, but it is not tamed. Had it free scope, its old instincts would again assert their sway. So I keep an eye on the enemy, and read the *Tablet* and *Weekly Register* as pertinaciously as any tonsured priest. The Catholic papers have of late been extolling one Father J. A. Zahm as the coming protagonist on behalf of the Church. Father Zahm is a Professor of Physics in the University of Notre Dame, in America. He has issued two works: one on *Science and Catholic Scientists*, the other on *Bible Science and Faith*, and was deputed to represent North America at the International Catholic Congress, held at Brussels in September. It is with his address on that occasion, published in full in *Donathoe's Magazine*, I propose briefly to deal. Father Zahm entitles his paper "The Warfare with Agnosticism," and it is a plea that Catholic priests shall be better equipped with weapons for this warfare. He sees the issue is bound to be a momentous one for his Church, and that the spirit of the time is making against it. He says: "The zeitgeist with which we must now reckon—and we cannot realise this fact too soon—is the spirit of science, the spirit of evolution, and the spirit, too, of most of the scepticism and materialism and atheism, which are now so rife, and which have been engendered by false views of nature, and erroneous inductions from facts observed." He points out that hitherto the Church has had to war against false religion, against "the superstitious practices of paganism, the perverse doctrines of Mohammed, and the religious errors of Luther and his asseclæ." Protestantism, in his view, is a thing of the past. It is fast breaking up, tending either to Rome or to infidelity. The issue is now between Catholicity, on the one hand, and Agnosticism. Father Zahm calls on his fellow Catholics "to arise in all haste" and come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. He reminds them that it is no good thinking now "of arms and methods which, although good in their day, are no longer available." Yea, verily, the Church cannot use the arms and methods she employed against freedom in the good old times, but the shades of Bruno and Galileo attest what those arms and methods were. Father Zahm's call for new weapons of defence shows that the Church, the Bastile of the human intellect, is giving way before the scientific assault. Priests, trained to meet the scientific advance, may for a while delay, but not avert its doom.

I confess I smile at Father Zahm invoking the Catholic priests to study science, and to give it prominence in ecclesiastical seminaries. Science cannot be studied without scientific methods. The spirit of scientific investigation being absolutely antagonistic to theological assumptions, in the long run, their incompatibility must become evident. In the case of Mr. St. George Mivart, who denied the Flood, the creation of Adam and the formation of Eve, but who was so sharply rapped over the knuckles for suggesting happiness in hell; and in the yet more noteworthy instance of the author of *The Policy of the Pope* who entirely rejects Bibliolatry, we see the first instances of the result of introducing science and scientific criticism into ecclesiastical colleges. Let the work go on. Freethought

will gain even by the training of its adversaries. As long as they are concerned only with words, languages, and metaphysics, they may remain theologians; but let them be trained in the study of facts, and become truly scientific, and their theology will gradually fade.

Of course, Father Zahm only wants science studied for the defence of the Church. He makes this pretty clear. "I do not, however, mean that they should become specialists in these sciences; that they should sacrifice the more important branches of philosophy and theology. Far from it. What I do mean is, that they should obtain a good working knowledge of these divers branches of science; that they should thoroughly understand the nature of the objections which are urged in the name of these sciences; that they should adequately realise their bearing on faith and morals, on dogma and Holy Scripture."

A scientifically trained person going thus far, will go farther. Once give play to the critical faculty, and you cannot restrict its limits. In the long run, reason and investigation must be applied to the fictions of the churches, as well as to the facts of nature. Protestants and Catholics alike only avail themselves of reason and science, so far as they do not see its issues. They are, in fact, trying to sit upon two stools without knowing that, like God and Mammon, faith and reason are rivals; and you cannot serve the one without rejecting the other.

The Church boasts of being ever and always the same. Yet to-day it is obliged to give up the old methods, and ask that its priests shall be trained in science in order to meet the enemy on its own ground. Can it do so without exposing the falsity of its old pretensions to divine, infallible authority? The power of the Church rests on the broad planks of ignorance, fear, and credulity. So far as she shifts from these, she is contriving her own undoing. Yet the Zeitgeist forces even Catholicism onwards. Landor well said of its priests: "So long as there are vice and ignorance in the world, so long as fear is a passion, their dominion will prevail; but their dominion is not, and never shall be, universal. Can we wonder that it is so general? Can we wonder that anything is wanting to give it authority and effect, when every learned, every prudent, every powerful, every ambitious man in Europe for above a thousand years united in the league to consolidate it?"*

But it is breaking to pieces. The craftsmen who once killed and imprisoned all who opposed their creeds are, one by one, throwing their dogmas overboard, and touching and trimming up those that remain, to accommodate them to modern thought and retain their own emoluments. They may lengthen the process, but Christianity is doomed. It is founded on myths and not on the reality of things.

No matter though it towers to the sky,
And darkens earth, you cannot make the lie
Immortal; though stupendously enshrined
By art in every perfect mould of mind:
Angelo, Raphael, Milton, Handel, all
Its pillars, cannot stay it from the fall.†

J. M. WHEELER.

THE FOOTE TESTIMONIAL FUND.

[Sixteenth List.]

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† Gerald Massey, *The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ*.

CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN LIFE.

IN a recent issue of the *London Quarterly Review* appeared an article entitled "The Christian Religion and Life of To-day," written, we presume, by the editor, in which the relation of the Church to modern society is dealt with at some considerable length. Although the writer is supposed to be a Christian, it would appear from some of his statements that there is but little, if any, relationship between the active life of the present time and the Church. For instance, he says that Christianity is an "unchanging" religion, and that the Christian Churches in all ages have been "imperfectly Christian." No doubt this is quite true, and the fact of its being so is a strong proof that orthodoxy is incompatible with the genius of modern life. If Christianity be "unchanging," it cannot meet the needs of those conditions of existence which are always changing as time rolls on. If the Christian religion suited our forefathers two thousand years ago, and if its nature is the same now as it was then, it is evident that it cannot be adapted to the present requirements of society.

The reason of this is obvious to the discerning and impartial mind. In the early ages societarian needs were the very opposite to what they are at the present time. Then asceticism, with its utter disregard of the world, implicit belief in what the churches taught, non-personal reliance, general ignorance among the masses, and individual submission were the principal characteristics; since then, however, a marvellous transformation has taken place. We are living in a practical age, when a lively interest is manifested in this-worldism; belief in creeds and doctrines does not hold its former sway over the people; self-reliance, knowledge, and personal independence are the chief features of the life of the nineteenth century. It is evident that, if this faith were congenial to the conditions of society two thousand years ago, it cannot be so now. No doubt, during many centuries, the people were governed by Christian principles, and history records the gloomy and degraded results that followed such government. But, with the advent of knowledge and the development of science, these principles were found inadequate to meet the requirements of the "new order of things"; hence Christianity has become divorced from the activities of modern life.

It is also true that the Churches have always been "imperfectly Christian"; they could not have been otherwise and continued to exist. It is the secular element in the Churches that has held them together, for it was soon discovered that Christianity, "pure and simple," was incapable of securing, for any length of time, the cohesion of any body of men. This explains why the Churches to-day are compelled to make another "new departure," and to secure additional aid from mundane resources. While this fact shows the inconsistency and lack of honesty in the theological profession, it also indicates the impotency of orthodox teachings as a real factor in daily life. As the writer in the *Review* says, Christianity is now confronted with "Socialism," and with the demand for a solution of "Social Problems." It may be that the latter phrase has become, as the writer remarks, "a kind of cant catchword"—that is, so far as the Churches are concerned; but the general masses will not be contented until the solution has been discovered. Christianity has failed to find this solution during eighteen hundred years of its profession, and it is now seen that it must be sought for elsewhere.

Reference is made in the same article to the works of Kidd, Westcott, Fairbairn, and Tolstoi, but we are told: "Readers will receive but little help from any of them towards the solution of pressing difficulties." This is precisely what we have repeatedly urged, and we are glad to know that our opinion is shared by, at least, one professed Christian, who has the courage to state what must be clear to every unbiassed thinker. In further confirmation of our position, the writer states that "to a lamentably large extent" the Christian Church "bears little relation at all" to the community. We are constantly being told of the rapid progress of Christianity, yet we are informed, in this article, that "it remains true that whole sections of the community are practically alienated from the Christian Church." This is a bold confession for one of the faithful to make; but the statement is true, and we are pleased to record it as coming from one who is

"behind the scenes," and who, therefore, should know the facts of the case.

The writer admits that Christianity is largely professed, and that its ministers are honored, but this faith "is not the religion of the English people." Dr. Fairbairn is allowed to be "right in the main" when he says that this alienation is not so much from "religion" as from the "Church," but it is added, "the fact of alienation remains." It is acknowledged, as we have long maintained, that Christianity "has nothing directly to do with the State," but that its function is "the renewal of individual life." That Christianity is powerless to successfully cope with our social evils the writer grants when he states: "It has been taken too much for granted that any sincere Christian can see his way through such problems at once." But we go further, and allege that Christ himself never saw "his way through such problems," and, therefore, he never stated how the solution could be effected. The fact should be kept in view that the present condition of society—with its marked distinctions between rich and poor, its blatant hypocrisy, its monopoly of wealth, and its abject penury—exists, despite the "glorious history" of Christianity, with its power, wealth, and fashion. With all these agencies which have been at the command of the Church for centuries, the religion of Christ has entirely failed to regenerate society in general. The cause of this failure undoubtedly is, that the New Testament does not contain the elements of social regeneration, and that the Churches have held aloof from the various movements which have for their object the secular improvement of the people. The writer appears to recognise the deficiency of the Church as a reforming force, for he says, "if it does not determine the color and course of current life, it will become, first, non-Christian, then un-Christian—it may be anti-Christian"—in the twentieth century.

But the Christian writer himself furnishes many reasons for believing that Christianity cannot determine "the color and course of current life." In the first place, he admits that the people are "alienated" from the Church, and secondly, that the religious bodies are divided among themselves as to what should be their attitude in the present crisis. One section is found "deprecating any action in political and social questions"; while others of the same fold declare, like the late Bishop of Peterboro', that to attempt to apply Christian teachings to the administration of society would be to "shatter the whole fabric" of our constitution. History furnishes us with many proofs that it is only by being united that the people can obtain relief from political or social evils. We cannot conceive of any great social change being produced without the co-operation of men who are agreed upon its desirability. And even with this agreement failure may come unless there is also a united opinion as to what method should be adopted by which the change is to be brought about. Now, the Church is by no means agreed as to either the desirability of certain reforms, or as to the method to be employed in order to secure the changes that may be deemed necessary. If it be true that "a house divided against itself cannot stand," then the "House of God" is doomed beyond doubt. Ample evidence was given at the recent Roman Catholic Conference, held at Preston, that the two hundred and forty millions of Catholics could never be united with their Protestant fellow Christians. Then there are impassable gulfs existing between many of the Protestant sects. It is most unlikely, therefore, that Christians will ever be able to truthfully say, "United we stand."

The writer intimates what, in his opinion, is the necessary work for the present Church. It is no less an undertaking than to "re-conceive and re-present the religion of the New Testament . . . the divine original in its purity and simplicity." This is not only a "very large order," but it is also a confession that the past conceptions and presentations entertained and given of Christianity were erroneous. In our opinion, this is a fact beyond dispute; but what proof have we that the new ones will be more correct? We may fairly ask, however, where can this "divine original purity and simplicity" be found? We fail to discover it in the Church or in the New Testament. Readers of history will know that the Church has not been remarkable for its purity, either human or "divine"; and, judging from the numerous works that have been written to "explain God's word," its simplicity cannot be very apparent. Moreover, we are unable to understand how an "unchanging religion" can give a new message to

every fresh generation when different circumstances present themselves; or how the eternal truth can continue if it is to be re-conceived and re-presented in any other but its old form.

There is no doubt but that Christianity has been misunderstood and misrepresented; how could aught else have been expected when we remember the obscure, complex, and contradictory nature of the faith? If it be the "same yesterday, to-day, and forever," we shall look in vain for the appearance of a "Second Daniel" who shall reveal the Christian mysteries. Perhaps Christ never desired that we should have the revelation, for he is reported to have said: "Unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven him." If the holy spirit has failed to inspire correct conceptions in the past, where is the evidence that the holy influence will be different in the future?

CHARLES WATTS.

THE PURITY CRAZE.

A WAG recently remarked that to the pure in mind everything is dirty. Accustomed as we are to deal in paradoxes, this stands out as possessing singular force, and being admirably suited to the present times. The great Stiggins has of late been on the war-path, and where Stiggins locates himself it is advisable to be aware. He has a peculiar power of making his presence felt, as, with solemn visage and holy tread, with eagle eye and sensitive nose, he measures the path in pursuit of his sacred calling. Everybody may be well aware that some things are not what they seem; yet it is the distinctive glory of Stiggins to violate and distort those whose inward essence is correlative with their exterior form. To him there is no beauty in art, no grandeur in nature; he sees nothing commanding of admiration in connection with man—at any rate, if he perceives such, he will not acknowledge it, and that which is unaccounted is mostly unappreciated. His forte is not in that direction. On the contrary, he seeks the ugly, he detects the nasty, he clutches at humanity's peccadilloes, he hunts for evil, he revels in dirt. When Stiggins views a picture, his examination does not stop at the point where ordinary mortals rest after feasting the eyes; no, he must turn the sheet upside down, hold it in the light, place it on the ground and look at it through his legs, put it on an easel and contemplate it while standing on his head, in order, if possible, to create some improper effect. How else can he manifest his purity of mind? When at the theatre he does not survey the ladies of the ballet with a casual glance, but from his vantage ground in the front row of the stalls he scans, with frenzied eagerness, their figures, their nether limbs are the subjects of the closest attention, and the extent of the frills and the height of the puck is duly made note of. The entrance of the leading *danseuse* is a sign for the use of his opera-glasses, which are adjusted for a prolonged and minute inspection of that portion of her anatomy which is of the greatest beauty and perfection. Oh! holy Stiggins! if we did not know that thou wert righteous, verily we might mistake thee for a gay old chappie.

How great is the influence of this mighty person may be understood by the number of "vigilance" and "purity" societies which are springing up here and there as thick and fast as mushrooms. It has become a fashionable vocation to engage in the protection of public morals. Nothing, of course, could be more estimable and honorable, either on the part of an individual or a class; but the way in which some people are endeavoring to keep the public mind pure is one calculated to arouse suspicion. Up to the present their efforts have been mainly directed towards the suppression of stage performances, which are a little removed from the dullness of general entertainments, and against the exhibition of nude pictures, as if the contemplation of that which can be seen in one's looking-glass any day can by any means be dangerous to morality. It may be that it will be the mirror which is next singled out for attack and abolition, and after that—but we will not anticipate. It is evident that the prurient mind is capable of much more than the ordinary perception, and that the prurient eye can discover

more filth in a day than another ocular exercise will be able to account for in a lifetime. The fretful whine of purity-mongers is fraught with more cant than anything we can conceive of. There will always be mud at the bottom of the clearest and purest stream, and it will only be the purity of the water which will suffer by the disturbance of the dirty bed. The purpose of those who take such sensuous delight in raking up the mud of our humanity is a mischievous and reprehensible one, and it is a strong token of their own nauseous dispositions. If the exhibition of evil caused evil to cease, the means would be justified by such a desirable end; but that this is a long way from being so is unfortunately too true. By perpetually overhauling the unsavory items of our social existence—by holding up to the public gaze the fiend immorality—by dragging attention to the dark spots of our civilisation—such evils are mostly only aggravated, and not appeased. Let everything be done, let nothing remain undone, to obliterate the vices which are the excrescences of our social system or personal failings, and, as happiness and prosperity will not be secured to all until they are alleviated, so should this task be one of the greatest aims and ambitions of all true reformers. But in pursuing the course which so many people of the present day adopt, that of hunting for vice for the sole sake of playing with the mire, of perverting the good, the high, and the noble, by tainting them with the sour and loathsome infection of their own diseased minds, the cause of purity is injured, and virtue receives a knock-down blow.

The prurient mind is at enmity against mankind. This does not prevent the immortal Stiggins achieving an amount of cheap popularity, for a sure road to a little fame is frequently gained by parading self-righteousness, and flaunting the wickedness of others in the eyes of the ignorant. That which is exercising many of the pure in mind to-day is the exhibition of "Living Pictures" at the Music Halls, where, it seems, they have met with unbounded approval. A certain clergyman of the Church, hitherto little heard of, and one who has probably been hungering for public notice, has hit upon an expedient for attracting the attention of the people, of a nature which only the vulgar would countenance. He has been lashing furiously against the "debasing and degrading" tendencies of the representation of notable artists' masterpieces by the aid of living exponents, and his attack apes the promptings of an outraged conscience. The "idea" has caught, and for the time his fierce and extraordinary diatribes have lifted him from the cradle of obscurity, and placed him on the pedestal of public eminence. It remains to be seen whether the high-minded parson will appreciate at what a cost it has been accomplished. The eminence has been gained at the price of his honesty, his honor, and his consistency. The reverend gentleman at the onset launched out on a general condemnation of the pictures, purely on hearsay evidence, making what has given delight to many, and wounded not the susceptibilities of the most susceptible, a subject of delicate character and indelicate curiosity.

Many people, we are well aware, are willing to be led by the nose, and the chances are that they would not move at all excepting after that style. This keeper of the public morals, after having condemned what he has not seen, visits the object of his wrath, his mind already made up and delivered on its merits. Such is clerical honesty. He enters the theatre with a free pass by favor of the management, and afterwards (for a second time) indulges in defamatory speeches against the *morale* of the entertainment, thus possibly injuring a gentleman whose generosity he has encroached upon for free admission. Such is clerical honor. He raves about the nude, yet at his own religious entertainment, after engaging in trombone playing himself, and having singing with theatrical effects, he causes to be exhibited a series of dissolving views, which mix up, in a terrible way, the two stories of "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Christ on the Cross," and another of which is representative of "Cain banished for his sin," the body of Cain being clothed, or rather unclothed, in primeval fashion. Such is clerical inconsistency.

It would be flagrantly insulting to right-minded people to discuss the effect and tendencies of these "Living Pictures," as anyone who has witnessed these beautiful and inspiring productions can bear testimony to their influence, or to argue against what Stiggins says are their wicked abominations. These outbreaks of pruriency are one of the worst and most lamentable features of the age, and it

is a pity they are so often tolerated by rational people without protest, though, perhaps, protest would only increase the narrow-minded and nauseating fanaticism of the misnamed purity people. By all means let there be healthy amusements for the people, elevating pictures, and modest statues; but when we begin to be unnatural we show our foolishness, and are only displaying our own tainted minds. Let there be purity in every walk and department of life, but let us not lose our heads over dark blots and nasty stains, which are not removed by wild denunciation. By castigating sin evil is only aggravated. Rather let us seek to change the conditions which are responsible for the maladies we so much abhor.

FRED WILSON.

THE EVIL OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE FROM A SCRIPTURAL STANDPOINT.

(CONCLUDED.)

WHILE the spirit of Christ's teachings is opposed to the relation of the sexes in the sexual union, together with his positive assertion, and also that of St. Paul, as we have quoted, if anyone cannot receive that *extreme* doctrine of renunciation, and wishes to marry, and does so, then let us see what a *very sacred and holy union marriage is from this same authority, the Bible and Christ.*

So-called good society allows and tolerates divorce for many reasons. Should one be bold enough to advocate *non-divorce* for any reason whatsoever, no doubt the old term "crank" would be applied to such an one. If that should be, let us see what we can find in the New Testament to uphold such a "cranky idea."

Turning to that book, we will reserve what St. Matthew has to say upon this subject, until later. In Mark x. Jesus is quoted as saying, according to the old law, Moses allowed divorce on account of the "*hardness of their hearts,*" and for that reason a bill of divorcement was given, and, speaking of the parties being made through the union called marriage as one flesh, he says: "What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

The above made such an impression upon his disciples' minds that they asked him again of the same matter, and he used these pointed words: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

If words have any meaning, those words cannot mean but this—that no exception is to be made for granting a divorce, and should men or women divorce themselves from husband or wife for any cause whatsoever, and marry again, they commit adultery by so doing.

That is the testimony we can bring from the Gospel of St. Mark. Turning to St. Luke, we find he is of the same opinion. For we read in his gospel (xvi. 18) words that cannot convey but *one* meaning, and that is, *that divorce is wrong*, for he says, and he makes no exception, that "whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

St. John, being the most spiritual writer of this book, seems to have overlooked such a *fleshy* subject as this. We find nothing in his gospel in regard to divorce.

St. Paul, being a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a strong believer in celibacy, and one incapable of holding a high opinion of woman, is continually preaching against fornication, adultery, and *all* impurities of the flesh. In Romans vii. appear these pointed words upon this subject of divorce: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So, then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

We find from the above quotation that *only death* can place either party in a position to marry again. And this same writer (St. Paul), realising that there would be misunderstandings between parties in the marriage relation, so *great* that a separation *might* take place, and *that* be the cause of a divorce, says in 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11: "And unto the married I command, yet not *I*, but the *Lord*, let not

the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain *unmarried*, or be reconciled to her husband, and let not the husband put away his wife."

If words have a meaning, do not those words mean that divorce should *never* take place? And yet so-called Christian society, for many reasons, will grant a divorce to either party, and many who profess to be believers in the Bible as the word of God, and that God to be Christ, in direct opposition to the teachings of that character as found in that book, will uphold society in its granting of divorce, and justify themselves in the supposed teachings of the book by allowing that evil for *one reason in particular.*

Turning to St. Matthew, we find where they get their authority for allowing divorce for that one cause—fornication. In Matthew v. 32 we read the following: "That whosoever shall put away his wife, *saving for the cause of fornication*, causes her to commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

Upon the testimony which we have brought to bear upon the subject of not granting a divorce for any reason whatsoever, should the above read with *saving* left out, the true meaning of the above would appear. Then it would convey the meaning that, even though the wife had committed fornication, had been untrue to her husband, had been false to her ideal womanhood, by divorcing her her husband causes her to commit adultery should she marry again. And for *that* reason, though fornication had been committed by the wife, the husband should not, even for that grave offence, put away the woman he should protect in her weakness.

If we are told to love our enemies, to forgive our brother, though he sins against us seventy times seven, does it not seem as though a husband should forgive a *wife* for thus sinning against him? If at an unguarded moment a wife should fall, should the man who has promised to love, cherish, and protect her, turn her away to go lower and to fall deeper into the social mire?

Again, in Matthew xix. 9 the same exception is made for granting a divorce. The most Christ-like spirit to extend to an unfortunate wife would be to act towards her as we are told to by St. Mark, St. Luke and St. Paul.

Upon this question, Tolstoi, in his *What I Believe*, p. 80, speaking of the sentence, "Whosoever putteth away his wife, *saving for the cause of fornication*," etc., says that "that sentence is *grammatically incorrect*." After stating his reasons why it is incorrect, he goes on to say, "If it were said that the husband who puts away his wife, besides being guilty of fornication, commits adultery, the sentence would be grammatically correct."

Who will say, after reading the testimony of these different inspired writers, that Tolstoi is not nearer the truth than the way the Church has translated that passage?

It is interesting to note this, while Christ taught in his doctrine of renunciation, that *all* gratification of the flesh had the effect contrary to the spirit and to the free access into the kingdom of heaven, nowhere in the gospels are marriage and women spoke of as they are in the rest of the New Testament.

If the four gospels had been all of the New Testament, that holy and sacred union of the sexes, marriage and woman would have been looked upon and dealt with in a different way from which they have been for the past one thousand eight hundred years.

It has been the writer's good fortune, while taking a trip through the Holy Land, to stand by the ruins of a house in Bethany which they point out as being Simon's house. In this house, tradition says, the Magdalene came and washed the Nazarene's feet, and that she was the one who, taken in adultery, heard those words, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more," spoken in a voice so sweet that the beauty of the lesson taught in them will last forever.

What has been the cause of the great injustice done to women in the marriage relation? Why has she been for centuries nothing better than a slave, politically, and too often the same in the marriage relation?

The organisation called the Church was founded by St. Paul, and until Freethought destroyed its power it was the power that created the feeling by which laws were made governing the marriage relation; and women are indebted to a man for their debased position for ages past, and that man is—*St. Paul!*

To uphold the statement that woman owes her degraded position to St. Paul, should be very interesting reading

to woman, and it may throw a great deal of light upon this subject to her, should she read the following passages taken from the writings of *her inspired (?) friend, St. Paul* :—

1 Cor. xi. ; 1 Cor. xiv. ; Ephesians v. ; Colossians ii. 18 ; 1 Tim. ii. ; 1 Tim. v.

And St. Peter seems to have remembered woman in the same *un-Christlike* way in 1 Peter iii.

We have presented these two subjects, "Marriage and Divorce," from the Scriptural standpoint, stating our premises to be that those scriptures we have quoted are inspired. Are we correct in our conclusion, *that the marriage relation is not the highest life, and that divorce for any reason is wrong?* Upon St. Paul's teaching has been built the prison that has held woman captive for ages. Do away with the influences of the *Church of St. Paul*, and let the *teachings of Jesus* take root in the hearts of men and women (especially women), and then women will be free ; and all true men and women should strive for the dawning of that bright day.

—*Freethinkers' Magazine.*

GANO BRYAN.

HOW ICELAND WAS WON FOR CHRIST.

THE successes of Christianity have been always achieved by fraud or force ; or, rather, by a mixture of both. Thus the conversion of the barbarous nations that destroyed the Roman empire usually took place in some such way as follows : Ecclesiastics, or monks, armed with crosses and the usual paraphernalia of religious imposture, such as is used by Indian medicine-men and Kafir witch-doctors, approached some king, queen, or other great person, and persuaded him—more generally her—to accept baptism. The rest was easy. "The rivers were instantly filled with thousands of obedient subjects, who acquiesced in the truth and excellence of a doctrine which had been embraced by their sovereign" (see Gibbon's account of the conversion of Olga, Wolodomir, and Russia, chap. lv. ; the conversion of Clovis by the influence of Clotilda, of Ethelbert by Bertha, with their Franks and Saxons, etc.). When Christianity was strong, it proselytised with the sword. Charlemagne traversed the entire territory of the Saxons, "causing them to be baptised by thousands by the army of priests who accompanied his march . . . he offered them the alternative of baptism or extermination" (*Students' France*, p. 66).

The manner in which Iceland was won for Christ is curious, and little known. In the tenth century (it was discovered and colonised in the ninth) Iceland was a pagan republic, "the only absolutely free republic in the world" (Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, chap. xii.). Its possession was naturally desired by priests and princes. The conversion, which in this case preceded the conquest, was effected as follows : A German bishop first tried, but quitted Thule in despair. Thangbrand, the next missionary, performed some miracles, but was banished from the island for killing (miraculously, I suppose, as St. Peter did) two scalds, or bards, who composed scurrilous verses, deriding him and his faith. Olaf, the royal saint of Norway, was about undertaking an expedition to convert the Icelanders by the sword. We may learn the methods of these early missionaries from the following passage in the Saga of Sigurd the Crusader, just a century later (*Heimskringla*, Laing's translation). On his voyage to Palestine, the pious pilgrim landed near Lisbon, then a city of Moorish Spain. "King Sigurd took the castle of Sintre (Cintra), and killed every man in it *because they refused to be baptised*," and he got there an immense booty. So sings Halldor Skualdre :—

The men he treated as God's foes
Who dared the true faith to oppose ;
No man he spared who would not take
The Christian faith for Jesus' sake.

The evangelisation of Iceland, however, was accomplished by milder measures. Two natives of Thule, who knew their countrymen, suggested to King Olaf that a little money expended in so poor an island would prove a powerful controversial argument, and undertook to expound the faith more clearly than the German bishop or Thangbrand had done. By the promise of a bribe they induced the lawman (or president) of the republic to persuade his subjects to submit to baptism, on condition that some harmless native customs, such as infanticide, private sacrifice, and eating horse-flesh, should not be interfered with. On these easy

terms Christianity was acknowledged in the Northern Isle (A.D. 1002). The clergy, however, became the agents of the kings of Norway, and succeeded, after two centuries of intrigue, in bringing the island under their rule (A.D. 1262). Bribery is a common method of conversion with all religions, and is at least better than butchery.

JAMES A. RICHARDSON.

[Authority for above, Robertson's *History of the Christian Church*, bk. iv., chap. viii.]

A CONUNDRUM FOR PREACHERS.

THE other day the Lord, or the Devil, or the laws of nature, or somebody else, or something else, set the woods on fire up in Michigan and burned up five hundred people, and seven towns, and millions of dollars' worth of timber ; and the smoke was so thick from it out of my house in the country, eight miles from here, that it looked like judgment day had come and the world was on fire.

You can't say that men got up all that fire, for they could not make everything dry enough to burn ; and what I want to know is, who made that fire, God or the Devil or the laws of nature ?

The fire burnt up five hundred men, women, and children, indiscriminately ; but it burnt more women and children than men, because the women and children could not get away so easily, and the kind of women that it burnt most of were those women who worked to save their children until the fire burned the mothers up.

Now, what I want to know is, who is running this thing, anyhow ?

If you say they are the laws of nature, then why ain't you all Atheists like I am ? If it is the Devil that is running this world and starting a little annex of hell here on earth, and burning up innocent women and children, instead of bad men, as the Bible says they do in the regular main building of hell, why don't the Lord kill the Devil ? or can he kill the Devil ? or does the Lord keep the Devil because it suits the Lord ? or does the Devil keep the Lord because it suits the Devil ? Who's bossing this job, and running this mersheen ?

If you say it's a good God that is raising all this hell, please furnish us a few samples of what you would expect a bad God to do ?

—*Blue Grass Blade.*

CHARLES C. MOORE.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Western Daily Mercury*, a Plymouth "Liberal" paper took no notice of Mr. Foot's lectures in the Co-operative Hall, though it reported several little Dissenting gatherings. It also devoted a leaderette to the Methodist New Connection, which is said to be making steady progress. "Fifty years ago," the *Mercury* says, "it was shaken to its centre by the defection of Joseph Barker, who, posing as a religious reformer, sank by degrees to the most grovelling unbelief, Atheism, but at length found his way back to a profession of Christianity."

"Grovelling" is good. Fancy the writer of this leaderette grovelling down to the level of William Clifford, or Charles Bradlaugh, or Robert Ingersoll !

A Hull newspaper reports the death and funeral of Gipsy James Young. Deceased's tent and belongings were destroyed by fire, lest his spirit should return and haunt them. His widow was thus left with nothing but the clothes she stood up in. Such are the beautiful consolations of religion.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, in the *Nineteenth Century*, makes a suggestion to believing Sabbath-keepers. It is that they shall relieve their servants from all Sunday work by themselves performing the offices they now demand from others. He points out that the commandment is against ordinary work, and not against recreation. To keep the Sabbath, he says, all workers must be allowed complete rest, necessary work being done by those other members of the household who have spent the week largely in idleness or in pleasure.

Will Sabbatarians do this ? Oh dear, no ! They will denounce all who wish opportunities for healthy recreation and culture on Sunday, while they do not scruple to work

their servants harder than ever on that day. They say nothing of the Prince of Wales patronising the Sunday theatre in Paris, but fine every poor barber or sweet-stuff seller who endeavors to turn an honest penny on their fetish day.

"One on tramp" strikes into the controversy on "How Can we Save?" He says: "We have had nearly nineteen hundred years of Christian teaching, and the bulk of us have not learned the merest elements of it. The noble Founder told us as plain as he could speak not to lay up treasure upon earth, but to take no thought of the morrow, only asking day by day for our daily bread." He dates from the casual ward of the Leicester Workhouse.

The late forest fires in America devastated over 60,000 square miles of territory, and burnt to death between 600 and 700 human beings. Fresh fires, with loss of life, have since broken out in Minnesota.

Among other instances of divine providence are a water-spout near Valencia, Venezuela, which, on the 28th ult., killed 150 persons, and did great damage to the crops; cyclones in Southern Minnesota, Iowa, and Kansas, killing upwards of 50 people and injuring more; a cyclone at San Domingo, destroying half the town; a destructive storm in the Transvaal; floods in Cuba; and an explosion at Granada Barracks, killing over 100. Surely He is sleeping or, peradventure, on a journey.

Miracles have at last appeared in Wales, at the Well of St. Winefride. The Catholic papers have reported numerous cases of cure by bathing in the holy water, which, it seems, some patients also drink. A correspondent of the *Daily News* went to investigate, but had to remain unconvinced. He says: "I had not the good fortune to see the sick miraculously cured, or the blind receiving their sight. Apparently St. Winefride does not gratify the unbelieving. Even those who have faith are cautioned not to expect marvels till the third time of asking." If they do not get satisfaction then, it is doubtless for some good reason.

The old fraud of stirring up the blood of St. Januarius was carried out at the Naples Cathedral this year, as usual. When the warmth of the priest's hand had liquefied the contents of the vase, a gun was fired at the Mole to announce success, and the superstitious among the populace rejoiced, auguring from the miracle a good and happy year.

The Scottish Labor Party has had Mr. J. Morrison Davidson lecturing at Dundee on "Communist Christ." We agree with much that Mr. Davidson said about princes, peers, priests, and plutocrats. But what we cannot understand is the introduction of Jesus Christ in the controversy. Mr. Davidson must be a very sanguine man if he fancies that "the carpenter's son" is going to reform the world, after his long egregious failure of nearly two thousand years. There is not even agreement amongst those who call themselves his followers, as to what he taught. Nintenths, at least, of all the Christian ministers in Dundee would have disputed Mr. Davidson's reading of the gospels. A plague on both sides! say we. Reformers should drop Jesus Christ, and simply consider what is for the secular welfare of the people.

Cowgate Port, Dundee, was restored in 1877, and a certain brass plate was put up with a very brazen inscription: "During the plague of 1544 George Wishart preached from the parapet of this port, the people standing within the gate, and the plague-stricken lying without in booths. He sent his word and healed them. Psalm cvii." George Wishart must have been a very powerful preacher. Scotland has still a good many Bonerges, but not one of them could so much as preach away an attack of measles. George Wishart settled the plague, and the religion he helped to establish has been the plague of Scotland ever since.

According to a scathing article on "Syrian Missions" in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of September 26, the Christian heathen-saver only succeeds in gaining the ill-will of the natives, who are accustomed to say on his arrival, "Another liar has come."

In view of the deficiency, at the close of the last financial year, of £28,827 in the accounts of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, the President of the Conference has appointed a day of intercession for missions at home and abroad. Prayers are solicited, but contributions are not to be forgotten.

Mr. Edmund Mitchell, writing on *The Chinaman Abroad*, says that the heathen Chinese, though a gambler, taxes his games for the purposes of charity. At the side of their gaming tables is a box for the poor, "and the successful player, at the close of each game, dropped a portion of his winnings in it." He asks if his Caucasian detractors in

America and Australia can say as much for their gambling saloons and race meetings.

Max Müller contributes to the October *Nineteenth Century* an article on the alleged Indian sojourn of Christ. He classes the story told by M. Notovitch with the Tibetan experiences of Madame Blavatsky. He concludes that the alleged discoverer of the *Life of Issa* is either a dupe of Buddhist monks or a fraud. The latter seems the more probable alternative. At all events, an English lady writes from Leh, Ladakh, where M. Notovitch says he got his manuscript: "There has been no Russian here. No one has been taken into the seminary for the past fifty years with a broken leg. There is no *Life of Christ* there at all! It is dawning on me that people, who in England profess to have been living in Buddhist monasteries in Tibet, and to have learnt there the mysteries of Esoteric Buddhism, are frauds. The monasteries, one and all, are the most filthy places. The Lamas are the dirtiest of a very dirty race. They are fearfully ignorant, and idolaters *pur et simple*; no, neither pure nor simple."

A strange development of Theosophy is reported as preached in Christchurch, New Zealand, by the Rev. Mr. Worthington, late of New York. Candidates for initiation are said, in the *Liberator*, to have to go through an ordeal similar to that of initiates into the Saeta Puja. The mystic signs of the Esoteric Section are also said to have an indecent character.

The Sydney *Bulletin*, noticing Talmage's lectures in that city says the principal feature of his elocution is its unexpectedness. "The preacher's great drum-like voice, which generally suggests a corn crake in low circumstances, rises with a cry like the yell of a lost soul just when there seems to be no reason for it; and the effect vaguely suggests that Talmage himself is doing the talking, and that the yells are put in by an accomplice, who always gets his cue at the wrong moment."

The *Bulletin* says that every parson is at heart a showman, but most of them do not know their business. Talmage's preaching, however, "strongly suggests that the Deity is a sewing-machine, and that Talmage is pushing the sale of it for all he is worth."

An esteemed correspondent tells of two little dodges of C.E.S. lecturers. One is to cite Huxley as believing in the soul, giving his words, "Our knowledge of the soul is more intimate than our knowledge of the body," from his paper on "Descartes' Discourses on Method." If the lecturer can get a bet on the subject, he produces the early editions, oblivious of the fact that, in later editions, Huxley appends the footnote, that by soul he means the sum of the states of consciousness of the individual.

Another disreputable trick, our correspondent tells us, has been practised in Hyde Park. A letter is read, full of belief in the Christian religion, and then the question is asked: "Do you know who wrote that?—Abraham Lincoln." A bet was managed, but it is doubtful if the deluded challenger would have paid had he known that the extract was from a letter written by Lincoln to his mother when he was nine years of age.

The Rev. H. J. Schaffter, speaking at the Eastbourne meeting of the Church Missionary Society, said that he had only seen in India one intoxicated Brahmin, which was a very rare sight; moreover, he was told that he was about to become a Christian. He regarded this remark as one of the severest stabs he had ever received. The high-class Brahmins being abstemious, and laboring under the prejudice that all Christian people were otherwise, this became a great difficulty in the way of their conversion.

The Rev. E. N. Thwaites, who followed, saw that this line would hardly rake in the shekels, so he dwelt on the duty of saving the millions of heathen in India from eternal damnation. "Here," he said, "were men who were going down into death and the grave, not knowing where they were going, but going surely down into an awful and terrible eternity. The question was, what were they going to do? There was no one else to carry the gospel except Christians. These people were going down by thousands into an awful grave without hearing the name of Jesus, and the responsibility for carrying them salvation rested solely with Christian people." What a delightful old God that sends thousands into an awful grave without even knowing the terms of salvation.

The Rev. H. Ward Price, of Stockport, sent a letter to the Cheshire Congregational Union, urging the necessity for a revival. He laments that "Sunday tea drinkings detained both visited and visitors from the House of Prayer; deacons and their families cycled out on country roads for one-half of the day devoted to service. God's ministers had been

known to evince more interest in the mirthful surroundings of the supper table than in the serious work of the Church." Secular work and secular honors were increasingly attractive to men of ability and work, and, in short, if the Church does not come to the help of the Lord, Secularism will compel him to take a back seat.

The Evangelical Alliance Conference, at Tunbridge Wells, also occupied itself with "Unbelief." The Rev. Dr. Jenkins made the statement that Assyrian discoveries showed that God was making the very stones to cry out against the scepticism of the age; which will be news to the readers of Mr. Chilperic Edwards's *Witness of Assyria*.

A Dundee minister, the Rev. J. Aitken, doesn't like Sunday cyclists; in fact, he has been preaching against them, and denouncing the "shameless riders" who "meet streams of church-goers full in the face without a blush." The reverend gentleman is tackled in the local *Courier* by "An Old Cyclist," dating from Arbroath, who hints that ministers estimate holiness by the rule of £ s. d.

George Borrow's readers will remember his Defoe-like description of his reading the Bible to the Gypsies in Spain, and how they all squinted as he did so. They were too polite to call it "bosh," but the squint was a terribly eloquent criticism.

Miss Frances Power Cobbe, in her recently-published *Recollections*, hints that Borrow had not so much belief in the Bible himself. Perhaps he was not so bad as the Gypsies, but he was evidently a pagan at heart.

Jabez Balfour, on being arrested (says a Buenos Ayres correspondent of the *Morning Advertiser*), made this request: "Pray let me have my Bible, in order that I may commune with my God in this my hour of trial." What a pious gang the Liberator swindlers were, to be sure!

Rev. John Robertson, the perfervid and eccentric Glasgow preacher, declares that the Free Kirk is "the most powerful propagandist agency for scepticism in the world to-day." We hope it is true.

Professor Blackie told an interviewer from the *English Illustrated* the following story in illustration of the severe religious training of Scottish children. "A Highland boy," said he, "in the neighborhood of Dingwell, being shown by a young lady a series of pictures representing human figures, had his attention more particularly fixed by one in which a gigantic grim warrior appeared with a heavy club in his hand in the act of dealing a blow, and immediately he came out with the question, 'Is this God?'"

The *Middlesex Gazette* reports a sermon by the Rev. H. Storer Toms, at Christ Church, Enfield, on "The Christian Attitude towards Scientific Truth." The reverend gentleman has a very free-and-easy way of disposing of the contradictions between science and the Bible. After stating that some of the truths of modern science could be absolutely demonstrated, he remarked as follows: "Should any of these things be found to contradict what they believed to be the teaching of the Bible, it must be regarded as proved that they were mistaken in their interpretation of the Scriptures." In other words, make the Bible mean anything that science may require; that is—to use the phrase of Erasmus—treat it like a nose of wax.

They have a choice Minister of Public Instruction in Austria. At a meeting of the German Doctors' Congress, he questioned the right of Progress and Science to advance too far, and said that he thinks "that, if the results of Science are made popular, they will tempt unripe intelligence to jump at dangerous conclusions, and will cause an unhealthy growth of unbelief." This minister would have done well in the days of Francis, Joseph II. of Austria, who said he wanted no men of science, but only docile subjects, in his dominions.

The London Board School teachers seem to have no leader. In their last manifesto they make it evident that they really do not want to teach theology; while, at the same time, they resent the imputation of not teaching all the essentials of the Christian faith, including the divinity of Christ. The natural reply of the Churchman is, if they do teach this theology, what objection can there be to having it defined, and the teachers tested on the subjects they teach. The teachers quite as much as the Nonconformists need to be driven from the evasion of the illogical compromise.

In the *Two Worlds* they have been discussing the momentous question, whether people can be dead for 600 years without knowing it. A Leeds spiritist reported that some nuns had been imprisoned in Kirkstall Abbey ever since the thirteenth century, and some others have been anxiously

inquiring why their spirit friends did nothing for them all that time.

By the way, Mr. Herman Wettstein asks the American mediums to give some information concerning the dead burnt in the great Hinckley fire, so that friends without evidence of their identity shall be able to identify them. Modern spiritism isn't of much use if it cannot do as much as this.

The *Progressive Thinker* (Spiritist), of Chicago, cracks up D. D. Home as a wondrous medium who was never exposed. Some people think the trial of Lyons v. Home, in which the medium was shown to have cajoled £60,000 out of an old lady, under pretence of a spirit communication, was quite sufficient exposure.

Here is a curious advertisement from the *Catholic Times*: "A member of the Apostleship of Prayer begs all readers, immediately on seeing this, to offer up a prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady Help of Christians, asking that he may be successful in his efforts to sustain his credit. He promises that the favor, if granted, will be published, and three masses said for all who pray for him."

Herod Makin, a baby farmer, was hanged at Sydney for murdering a dozen or more infants. He wrote a very pious letter to his wife and accomplice, who was reprieved from the capital sentence, expressing a hope to meet her in heaven.

The *Sydney Bulletin* gives a versified version of his letter, from which we clip the following:—

"Dear Sarah, if still you were keeping the Farm,
The Farm where we used to make hay,
I might have some dread of your coming to harm
When Death took you off and away;
But since you are fixed up in prison for life—
Reprieved by command of the Gov.—
The world, with its strife, cannot get at my wife,
I think you should meet me above—
I will speak to St. Peter, my love.

"How pleasant it feels to be 'washed in the blood!'
(See 2nd Corinthians—Paul),
There is comfort and joy in the sickening thud
With which I shall presently fall.
The judge asked the Lord to have mercy—you heard
The cant of that gentleman grim.
The judge did—absurd! I am thinking, my word!
I had better be praying for him—
There's no 'drop' salvation for him.

"Now, stick to the Bible, my Sarah, and kneel
Until you are sore at the knees;
There's a mansion where sinners can't enter and steal—
Do lay up your treasure there, please.
You've gone from the path that you formerly trod,
So try to be gentle and mild;
The Kingdom of God, though it strikes you as odd,
Is just like a dear little child—
A poor little baby-farm child."

Colonel Ingersoll has supplied both the papers and the pulpits with ample material. The reports of the Sunday sermons in the New York press show that the men of God are largely occupying themselves with the question of Suicide, and Colonel Ingersoll's views thereon.

Obituary.

WE note the death, at Nottingham, of a veteran Free thinker and Radical, Mr. William Harris Brooksbank, who had attained the great age of ninety-three. He was born at Nottingham on Dec. 6, 1801. In 1824 he wrote in Richard Carlile's *Lion*, and afterwards in the *Reasoner*, the *Pathfinder*, and the *National Reformer*, as well as in the local papers. He took a prominent part in the defence of Sunday trading, and, as a protest against the action of those who desired to abolish it, organised and brought into the town a band for the purpose of giving concerts of sacred music on Sunday evenings. The movement was strenuously opposed, and two bands, with which negotiations had proceeded, withdrew from their engagements. Mr. Brooksbank would not give in, however, and ultimately he succeeded in obtaining the services of a band from Sutton-in-Ashfield, which played for two hours on each Sunday evening during the summer on the cricket-ground in Queen's-walk. He was an intimate friend of James Watson, also of Mr. G. J. Holyonke, who published his *Sketch of the Religions of the Earth, Revelation Tested by Astronomy*, etc., 1856. He also wrote a *Life of Mahomet*. With his death the Freethought cause at Nottingham loses a link with early earnest times.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 7, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. :—
7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

October 14 and 21, Hall of Science, London; 28, Leicester; 29, Derby.

November 4, Manchester; 11, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—October 7, Edinburgh; 14, Glasgow; 21 and 22, Bradford; 28, Hall of Science, London. Nov. 4 and 11, Hall of Science; 18, Liverpool. Dec. 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.

A. WHITTET.—Thanks for the information, which you will see we have used. Our best and kindest regards to your amiable better-half. Mr. Foote is all the better for his travels in the North.

INQUIRER.—Professor J. W. Spencer sets down the age of the Niagara Falls at 31,000 years.

DURBANITE.—The Prayer-book we referred to is dated 1867. Later ones have been revised, and the interests of decency more protected.

E. S. S.—(1) Authentic Chinese history goes back nearly to 2000 B.C. You will find particulars in Dr. Legge's Introduction to the *Chinese Classics*. (2) Egyptian history goes back much earlier, extending, according to Mariette Bey, to 5000 B.C. Monuments are in the British Museums dating to 4000 B.C. The ethnological characters depicted on these monuments are almost as various as at the present time. (3) Max Müller and other authorities place the Rig-Veda, which lies at the foundation of the Brahmin religion, about fourteen centuries before Christ. It is very doubtful if any portion of the Old Testament is earlier than the eighth century B.C.

LOUIS LEVINE (Charleston).—We are much indebted to you for sending us important American articles.

H. C.—Dr. Otto Pfeleiderer, in his work on *The Development of Theology*, gives his opinion that Bishop Lightfoot's answer to *Supernatural Religion* is "extraordinarily weak"....."the short-sighted scholar found nothing better to do than to submit the author's examination of reference in the Fathers to the Gospels to petty criticism; while, even if all the Bishop's deductions were correct, the general result of the author's inquiries would not be in any way altered."

C. BRIDGER.—We have looked over *Les Récréations Scientifiques*, par Gaston Tissandier, but find no such passage as that you cite from the English version.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: H. Gadd, 2s. 8d.; F. Jones, 5s.

T. E. M.—Will notice the *Westminster*. Have not seen your "noble poem."

J. G.—Your verses on hell afford the best justification we have yet seen for that atrocious institution. Our fire will supply the warmth in which they are lacking.

A. G.—Many thanks. See "Acid Drops."

R. S. HOSE, Hon. Sec. Camberwell Branch, has moved to 18 Claribel-road, Holland-road, Brixton, S.W.

R. S. PENGELLY.—Crowded at present, but may use your paper later on.

ANXIOUS.—We do not answer legal questions, but we should think not.

E. GODWYNNE (Reading).—(1) Wolff's *Hebrew Grammar* might suit your purpose. (2) Mr. C. Rowe, 46 Cholmeley-road, may tell you as to meetings of the Reading Branch. We believe they are held at the Foresters' Hall, West-street, on the fourth Sunday in each month, at 7 p.m.

R. O. SMITH, Treasurer London Secular Federation, acknowledges: Donation: West London Branch, 20s. Collection: Battersea Branch, 3s. 2d.

T. MAY.—It is a pity you did not ask the question before rushing into print elsewhere with a positive answer. The N.S.S. principles do not involve a profession of Atheism. Secularism does not concern itself with the question of origins. It is a practical philosophy. If a Deist or Pantheist does believe in "divine guidance or interference" in human affairs, he is of course excluded by the terms of that principle.

F. R. BRD.—You should write "Lecture Notice" on the envelope; otherwise your communication is sent on to Mr. Foote as a private letter, if he happens to be away from London. We note here (your letter having been sent to Plymouth) that the Walthamstow Branch winds up the season this afternoon (Oct. 7) at 3 with an open-air debate between Mr. J. Boyce, C.E.S., and Mr. C. J. Hunt, N.S.S., on "Is there a God?"

A. WHEELER announces an important members' meeting of the Finsbury Branch at the London (Minor) Hall of Science this morning (Oct. 7) at 12.15. Speaking by the card, it is in the afternoon.

MR. WATTS'S ELECTION FUND.—Per Miss Vance, F. H. S., £1; M. Christopher, 5s. Per C. A. Watts, F. F. Arbuthnot, £1. Per Mr. Ward, Mr. Arnsby, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Leat, 1s.

W. R.—It was an unkind suggestion. Mr. Foote went to Manchester on September 26 at his own expense, and had to travel back to London by the night train after the meeting.

BEAUCARION.—Baron Holbach was the real author of the *System of Nature*. He was born in 1723, and died in 1789. Rich and generous, he was the patron of the Freethought movement in France, and the friend of Voltaire, Diderot, and nearly all the leading spirits of the age. There is a detailed account of his writings in Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*—a valuable work, which every Rationalist should have on his library shelves.

DEALITE.—Can any of our readers say where the *Freethinker* and Freethought literature can be obtained at Deal?

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.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—La Raison—La Irradiacion—Crescent—New York World—Freidenker—Accrington Observer—Blue Grass Blade—Nottingham Guardian—Echo—St. Pancras Star—Eastbourne Chronicle—Staffordshire Sentinel—English Mechanic—Rochester and Chatham Standard—Rad—Donahoe's Magazine—Liberty—Sunday School Magazine—Truthseeker—Zoophilist—Yorkshire Evening Post—Mona's Herald—Liberator—Daily News—Weekly Bulletin—Progressive Thinker—Isle of Man Times—Der Armo Toufol—Sydney Bulletin—Horwich Chronicle— Ipswich Star.

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. Fordor, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

FREETHOUGHT lectures used to be delivered in the St. James's Hall, Plymouth, and sometimes to very large audiences. But when the hall passed into the hands of a Company it was no longer available for such purposes. St. George's Hall, Stonehouse, was then tried, but it was rather out of the way. Still, it was a great deal better than nothing, and the Secularists made use of it until it fell into the hands of the Corporation, when it was closed to such wicked people. In the circumstances the Secularists had to lie low and wait for the dawn of a better day.

Co-operation is a live movement at Plymouth, and the Society's 15,000 members required a large Hall for their meetings. Being very prosperous, the Co-operative Society resolved to have a hall of its own, which has been erected at the top of a fine new block of buildings in Courtenay-street. It is a large, handsome, and commodious room, with up-to-date appointments; and reflects credit on the taste and enterprise of the Plymouth Co-operators. What is no less to their credit is their willingness to let their hall to all sections of the community.

Mr. Foote delivered three lectures in this Co-operative Hall on Sunday. The weather was delightful; the sun shone brilliantly, and its heat was tempered by a cool northerly wind. It was a grand day for an outing, yet that "awful man," the editor of the *Freethinker*, had good audiences in the morning and afternoon, and an excellent audience in the evening. His lectures were to all appearance highly relished, and the applause must have reached the ears of the chapel folk up the street. The evening audience was particularly enthusiastic.

Discussion was invited, but little was forthcoming. A few questions were asked in the morning, and more in the afternoon. One elderly gentleman, with a solemn face, a slow-wagging beard, and a Jeremiah voice, asked a string of irrelevant questions, and then mounted the platform amid orthodox applause, for he looked bent on demolishing the lecturer and trampling on his insignificant remains. But the lugubrious Bible-champion turned out a failure. He had to be called to order, or rather to the subject; and even the orthodox were relieved when he sat down. In the evening there was no discussion at all. The local infidel-slayer, who had often boasted what he would do if Mr. Foote ever dared to visit Plymouth again, found it necessary

(or convenient) to be laboring in some other part of the Lord's vineyard.

After the evening lecture Mr. Foote met the faithful remnant of the old Branch, and many other friends of the movement, in the large ante-room. Mr. R. S. Smith opened the ball with a neat little business speech, and Mr. Barter spoke on behalf of the Old Guard of Freethought in the town, promising assistance if "something were done." Several ladies and gentlemen gave in their names as willing to join the Branch, and it was decided that the Committee should arrange for a semi-public meeting on the following Sunday evening, due notice to be given in the local newspapers. At that meeting plans will be discussed and settled for a winter's campaign, and we wish it every success. There are plenty of Freethinkers in Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse to maintain a strong Branch of the N.S.S., and it is to be hoped that they will hold many good Sunday meetings in the Co-operative Hall.

Mr. Foote will now lecture for three Sundays at the London Hall of Science, after which he will spend many Sundays in the provinces. His subject this evening (Oct. 7) is "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" Mr. Foote has never treated this question in public before, and no doubt a large number of Freethinkers will be glad to hear his thoughts upon it. What he has to say should also be of interest to Christians.

Mr. C. Watts reports a good audience at York, where he lectured for the first time, and extra large audiences at Dundee, where music preceded the lectures. After the evening lecture there was an excellent discussion, and five new members were enrolled. This Sunday Mr. Watts lectures in Edinburgh both in the afternoon and evening.

Mrs. Frederika Macdonald had an excellent audience at the Hall of Science on Sunday. Her subject, "Seven other Devils," had been altered by some wag on the Notice Board to "Mrs. Macdonald and Seven other Devils"! The discourse was based on some verses in Matthew's Gospel, the lesson being intended to show that, in throwing over the worst features of superstition, it is necessary to be careful in not hurting the feelings of those who have abandoned the literal interpretation of dogma, but who find in it spiritual comfort. The latter portion of the discourse was a vigorous attack on the absurd doctrines of the Theosophists, which provoked rounds of applause. Although there were several Theosophists present, no opposition was offered. Mr. Forder, who was in the chair, expressed the wish to see the lecture in print.

Mr. J. W. Martin's lecture at the Hall of Science to-day (Oct. 7), at 11.15, will deal with the relation of Secularism to Socialism. Mr. Martin, who is a member of the Fabian Society, is a thorough-going and outspoken Freethinker, and his lecture will certainly prove of great interest. George Standring will take the chair.

The Camberwell Branch commence their winter season to-day, Oct. 7, by a general meeting of members at 4.30. The quarterly tea follows at 6, with soiree at 7. The Science classes in Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, and Mechanics, conducted by J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., commenced on Oct. 4. The classes are entirely free, and prizes are given in each class.

All members of the Battersea Branch should attend the quarterly meeting at six o'clock this evening (Sunday, Oct. 7) for election of officers and other important business. After the meeting Mr. H. Snell will lecture and recite. The Battersea Secular Hall, which has been renovated, should be crowded on this occasion.

The Barnsley Freethinkers have presented Mr. Willie Dyson with a bicycle in token of their appreciation of his lectures on the Green during the summer. He will thus be able to extend the sphere of his operations.

The *Weekly Times and Echo* of September 30 devotes a column "leader" to George Standring's pamphlet, "An Atheist at Church."

At Dr. Emerson's lecture on "Thoreau," at South Place Institute, he told, with much gusto, the stories of how Thoreau, when clapped on the back by a clergyman who said, "Here's the chap who camps in the woods," replied: "And here's the chap who camps in the pulpit." Also the better-known one of his reply to his Calvinistic aunt, who, at his death-bed, asked him to make his peace with God: "I did not know we had ever quarrelled, aunt."

Even Dr. Joseph Parker has been moved to speak sensibly at last on the School Board question. He says, in the *Times*, Tuesday, October 2: "The consistent attitude for a Nonconformist to take is the adoption of secular teaching in

rate-supported schools. That is consistent. That is intelligible. In the end that will meet the confidence of the ratepayers." He further points out that there are over a hundred thousand clergy, ministers, Sunday-school teachers, missionaries, and evangelists in London to look after the interests of religion.

Signor Bovio writes to *Roma* to say that he has not consented to the withdrawal from the Roman theatre of his drama, *Cristo*, which has given such offence to the clericals, and he energetically protests against this infringement of dramatic liberty. In this drama Christ is not actually brought on the stage, though his apostles appear. He is, however, represented as no God, but a man of the people and an enemy of priestcraft. The play has been produced with much applause in the principal Italian cities; but Rome is still considered privileged.

The centenary of Gibbon's death is to be celebrated on November 15, when addresses will be delivered by Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, President of the Royal Historical Society, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and other distinguished men of letters.

Shelley's monument, erected at Viareggio where his drowned body was washed ashore in 1822, was duly unveiled on Sept. 30. Lady Shelley was represented by Colonel Leigh Hunt, and there was a distinguished gathering of Italian *littérateurs*. The monument is directly facing the sea, and its total height is fifteen feet. The bust of Shelley by which it is surmounted is the work of Professor Urbano Lucchesi, the eminent sculptor, and represents the poet at the age of twenty-nine. The eyes are gazing meditatively across the sea, and a pen just laid down appears from under the folds of the cloak. On the pedestal, encircled by intertwined branches of oak and olive, is a book bearing on its cover the word "Prometeo."

In the current *Nineteenth Century* R. Vasudeva Rau writes very moderately on the question, "Did Omar destroy the Alexandrian Library?" We have long held that this was one of the numerous calumnies upon the Mahommedans, and consider that M. Octave Delepierre conclusively proved it to be so in his paper on the subject, published by the Philobiblon Society, with which Mr. Rau, living at Hyderabad, is unacquainted.

Mr. Rau shows the little value of monkish legends. The first person who mentioned the alleged burning of the Alexandrian Library by Omar lived five hundred years after the time, and give no authority. Mr. Rau pertinently asks, if the legend were true, would not the early Moslem historians have gloried in it? It is very doubtful if the Alexandrian Library ever recovered from its destruction by the Christian Emperor, Theodosius; and, in short, the story, being quite inconsistent with Arab toleration and love of culture, must be dismissed as the fabrication of a later age, to cover up the shame due to Christian monks.

Mr. Symes needs rest and a change. He says in the *Liberator* that, if he can arrange for his paper to be carried on during his absence, he may pay a visit to England. He promises that, if he comes, he will tell Englishmen "some wholesome truths respecting Australia and its rulers, its newspapers, etc." If he comes, he will be heartily welcomed by his old friends, and doubtless make many new ones also.

Colonel Ingersoll contributes a long letter to the *New York World*, replying to the critics of his article on "Is Suicide a Sin?" and thus winding up the controversy. The *World* has "submitted this deeply interesting question to a notable jury of twelve men in public life," and will present to its readers "their views as a verdict"—which is a very silly idea in our judgment, as there cannot be a verdict in a controversy of opinion. Colonel Ingersoll's letter is carefully and beautifully written, and we have republished it in pamphlet form—price twopence.

Vacation Privileges.

The new Bishop of Bath and Wells denounces the thirst of gold as the root of all evil, and wants his countrymen to cease sacrificing their hope of a spiritual competency to the restless pursuit of a financial surplus. The antithesis of the venerable reformer is well pointed, but he might as well try to stop the rush for office in a country where Government employment is the only road to honor and prosperity. In China a man has to be either a mandarin or a cipher, and under the present system of British Sunday laws a law-abiding citizen has either to acquire the means of indulging in the luxury of a yearly vacation, or wear out his life in drudgery, aggravated, rather than relieved, by the deadly tedium of a Puritan Sabbath.—*Felix L. Oswald.*

A DISCUSSION.

I OBJECT *generally* to all funerals; I object *especially* to funerals conducted on orthodox principles; but more than all to those funerals which are conducted according to the rites of the Church of England.

Nevertheless, there are times when one sacrifices one's own dislikes to the feelings of others, and there is no occasion where this is more frequently done than at funerals. The sorrow of the friends or family of the deceased is a sort of sacred thing, before which most other considerations give way. So, having been pressed to attend the funeral of a deceased friend, I gave up my feelings and went, rather than add to the grief of his family.

Much of the proceeding was very offensive to me; but the most objectionable part of the performance took place after "the mortal remains" (as our friend's body was termed) were laid in the grave, and the "mourning carriages" had cheerfully trotted back from the cemetery to the house of the deceased, where, in accordance with custom, a repast had been provided for the mourners.

The clergyman who had "performed the service" sat next to me, and remarked, after smacking his lips over a glass of sherry:—

"I do not see how your views meet a case like this."

"I do not understand you," I replied.

"Well, the Christian system is consolatory, whilst that of the Freethinker is barren and heartless," said he.

"I have no inclination to dispute these matters," I answered, "at such a time; but, as you have opened the question, you must permit me to say that I do not think that the Christian system—even if it were true—has much to offer in the way of consolation."

"Why," said my "reverend" friend, interrupting me, "look at the prospect of meeting again."

"Where?"

"In heaven, of course."

"Ah," said I, "there is a difficulty. You bury everybody—the dissolute, the drunken, the cruel—all alike; you bury them, and you say you put their bodies in the ground 'in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection.'"

"Well?"

"People are not finally billeted in heaven or hell till the Day of Judgment. That is your creed, is it not?"

"I do not put it exactly in that way," replied my friend, "but the statement is near enough. The final destiny of the soul is settled at the Day of Judgment."

"But I heard you say of Miss — that you believed that she was now in heaven. Have the resurrection and the Day of Judgment passed, and has she been awarded her final reward? If not, what has become of her? It seems to me to be a difficulty, according to the Christian creed, to know what has become of all the souls of the people who have died, but who are not yet judged."

"Well, you know," said my friend, in a hesitating manner, "they are supposed to rest in the place for departed spirits—a sort of Hades."

"Then they are not sent to heaven or doomed to hell at once?" I inquired; "and all the souls from Adam to our time are in Hades, waiting to be judged."

"Yes, I presume so," said my questioner, in a doubtful manner.

"Do you conceive that such spirits are self-conscious, or have reminiscences of life? If so, they suffer pain probably?"

"Probably," said my friend, "their consciences accuse them, and in that sense they suffer."

"And they are thus condemned to suffer for thousands of years before they are judged. Not very consolatory," said I.

"They may or may not suffer. Perhaps they are unconscious; I cannot tell," he replied.

"I do not see much difference between an existence without consciousness and ceasing to be," said I.

"Sir," said my reverend adviser, severely, "you are, I fear, an infidel."

With that remark he rose and quitted the table—having, however, previously done ample justice to cold chicken and sherry.

J. B. L.

Mother—"Children, have you said your prayers?" Tilly—"Yes, mamma." Mother—"You were very quick about it." Tilly—"I prayed one half, and Daisy the other."

WITCHCRAFT IN SCOTLAND IN 1629.

THE following interesting and amusing witchcraft trial is extracted by an eminent Scottish antiquary from one of the note-books of the late George Petrie, Sheriff-Clerk of Orkney, now in the library of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. The trial is of more than ordinary interest as containing an example of the ancient ordeal of "bier-right," or the superstitious belief that, at the approach of a murderer, the body of the victim would bleed, and thus proclaim the wrongdoer. Shakespeare alludes to this belief in his tragedy of "King Richard III." (Act i., scene 2), where the Duke of Gloucester interrupts the funeral procession of King Henry VI., and Lady Anne exclaims:—

O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds
Open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh!

For the sake of southern readers, the language and spelling are freely anglicised; and, for the benefit of all, the items are considerably abridged. Those who would like to see an exact copy of the original of this unique document will find it in the *Orkney Herald* of August 15 last:—

"November 11, 1629. Prisoner, Witch Janet Rendall, or Rigga, a poor vagabond, for the abominable superstition and using of the witchcrafts underwritten.

"First, ye, the said Janet, are indicted and accused of the abominable superstition and superstitious abusing and deceiving of the people, and for practising of the wicked and devilish points of witchcraft and sorcery, done by you in manner, at the times, and in the places after specified, and in giving yourself forth to have sick craft and knowledge, thereby abusing the people.

"To wit: Twenty years since and more, ye being above the Hill of Rendall, having sought charity and could not have it, the Devil appeared to you, whom ye called Walliman, clad in white clothes, with a white head and a grey beard; and said to you he should learn you to win alms by healing of folk, and whosoever should give you alms should be the better either by land or sea, and those that gave you not alms should not be healed; and ye, having trusted in him, and entering in paction with him, he promised to you that whosoever should refuse you alms, and whatever ye craved to befall them should befall them, and thereafter went away in the air from you; whereby ye practised many and sundry points of witchcraft and devilry, and specially the points following, which ye cannot deny.

"Item: Ye are indicted and accused for coming, at Candlemas last, to Edward Gray, in Howakow, his house, and shaking your blanket as it were against the house; and Patrick Gray, his son, having come forth, and seeing you, called his father; and, fearing your evil, went to the barn and gave you some corn; and on Monday night, thereafter, two mares died both at once in the stable, and that the said Patrick took sickness the same hour he saw you, and wasted away three quarters of a year, and died; and ye being sent for before his death to see him, he being dead before and having laid his death on you. As soon as ye came in, the corpse, having lain a good space and not having bled any, immediately bled much blood as a sure token that ye was the author of his death; and all was done by your witchcraft and devilry, which ye cannot deny.

"Item: Ye are indicted and accused of coming to William Work, in Efaday, his house, on Halloweven, fours years since, or thereby, and knocking at his door. They would not let you in, nor give you lodging, who departing, murmuring and discontented. His wife parted with child upon the morn by your witchcraft and devilry, which ye cannot deny."

Sixteen more items are given, and the indictment concludes:—

"Item: Ye are indicted and accused for that, of your own confession, after ye met your Walliman upon the hill, ye came to William Rendall's house, who had a sick horse, and promised to cure him if he could give you two pennies for every foot; and, having got the money, ye cured the horse by praying to your Walliman; likewise, ye have confessed that there is neither man nor beast sick, that is not taken away by the hand of God; but for alms ye are able to cure it by praying to your Walliman, and that there is none that gives you alms but they will thrive either by land or sea, if ye pray to your Walliman, which ye cannot deny.

"And generally, ye, the said Janet Rendall, or Rigga, are indicted and accused of the said abominable superstition and superstitious abusing and deceiving of the people, and in using and practising of witchcraft and sorcery, and in giving yourself forth to have sick craft, skill, and knowledge, thereby abusing the people. And, therefore, and for the crimes committed by you in manner above written, ye ought, and should, undergo the law, and be adjudged to the

death for the same, as an example to others; and your goods and gear should be forfeited and appropriated to His Majesty's use, conform to the Act of Parliament and Common Law, and daily practice observed in such cases."

G. W.

LAWNSLEEVES IN THE LORDS.

CONSIDERING their paltry stipends, our right reverend fathers-in-God are altogether shamefully overworked. To their onerous task of overseeing souls they have to unite the functions of legislators. Surely it is time a Christian nation relieved these hard-wrought, ill-paid followers of the meek and lowly, who declared his kingdom was not of this world, from their burdens. For ages they have taken every opportunity of showing the people the desirability of such relief. At length the Liberation Society has published a pamphlet on their behalf, showing the votes of the bishops in the House of Lords from 1807 to 1891. It says the following is a record of some of the principal votes of the bishops during the present century. In the study of such a record it should be borne in mind that episcopal speeches have sometimes been as objectionable as their votes, and that there has also been reprehensible silence on the part of the bishops on occasions when their voices should have been heard on behalf of justice, or mercy, or purity, or peace:—

	BISHOPS.	
	For.	Against
National Education: Parochial Schools Bill authorising provision of schools out of the rates—1807	3	15
Appointment of Committee of Privy Council for Education—1807. (Rejected without a division)	—	—
Bill to abolish capital punishment for stealing from shops property of the value of five shillings—1810	0	7
Roman Catholic Disabilities Bill, 1821	2	25
" " 1822	1	23
" " 1829. (Ireland then on verge of civil war)...	10	19
Reform Bill, 1831	2	21
" " 1832	12	15
Jews' Disabilities Repeal Bill, 1833 (The Archbishop of Canterbury [Dr. Howley], in moving the rejection of this Bill, urged that the "moral and intellectual capacity of the Jews was not such as to entitle them to any share in the Legislature.")	3	20
Jews' Disabilities Repeal Bill, 1858 (when Bill passed)...	7	11
Admission of Dissenters to Universities, 1834	2	22
University Tests Abolition Bill, 1867	2	4
" " 1869	0	3
Church "Rate Abolition" Bill, 1858	0	24
" " 1860	0	16
" " 1867	0	7
Qualification for Offices Abolition Bill (to abolish the declaration which prevented Nonconformists accepting public offices):	0	2
" " 1860	0	4
" " 1861	1	12
" " 1862	0	8
" " 1863	1	10
" " 1865	1	13
Irish Church Bill—1869	1	16
Burials question (Lord Granville's motion to permit "Christian and orderly" services other than that of the Church of England in churchyards)—1876	1	15
Similar motion—1877	3	11
" (later in session)—1877	4	8
Burials Act—1880	10	6
Marriage with Deceased Wife's Sister—1883	0	22
" " 1883	0	17
Abolition of payment of wages in public-houses—1883	2	0
Factories and Workshops Bill (inclusion of laundries)—1891	2	0

The pamphlet further shows at length the votes of the bishops on the various amendments to the Parish Councils Bill, the Employers' Liability Bill, Welsh Educational schemes, and the London Improvement Bill.

After perusing this record we think there will be a consensus of opinion that the bishops should as speedily as possible be enabled to devote the whole of their valuable time to their spiritual office of overseeing souls.

BOOK CHAT.

It appears from Mr. L. W. King's article on "Ashurbanipul: His Books and Buildings," in the *Illustrated Archaeologist*, that this Assyrian king (669-625 B.C.), known as Sardanapalus, instituted a great national library, probably the first in the world. The Greeks of the age of Pericles were able to admire the plays of Æschylus and Sophocles, among the finest literary works ever produced; and in the Augustan era the library was as essential to the completeness of a house in Rome as the eating or sleeping room. Yet how often do we hear of the services of Christianity to literature; while it is a fact that during the long ages, when Christianity really prevailed, books were confined to monasteries, where the monks scraped off the writings of Pagan poets, philosophers, and historians, to inscribe thereon their own religious psalms and homilies.

* * *

A funny thing in Miss Florence Marryat's work on *The Spirit World* is a direction for conducting *séances*. It appears that the chairs ought all to be cane-bottomed "so as to let the influence through." Matter still appears to have a controlling influence over spirit after death.

* * *

Another story of a spirit is too good to be omitted. A circle, being requested to "tune up," commenced the immortal, never-fading "Shall we Gather at the River?" As they ceased an influence manifested itself, unknown to anyone there. On being asked who he was, he answered, "I am the unhappy composer of 'Shall we Gather at the River?' Had my life been twice as sinful as it was, I should have expiated everything by the purgatory I have suffered in hearing that tune sung so often and so badly at your various meetings? Cannot you possibly find something else to sing? I am sick to death of it."

* * *

A German work on *Auguste Comte, and his Signification for the Development of Sociology*, by Dr. Heinrich Waentig, is published at Leipsic by Drucker and Humblot, in their "State and Social Science Series," edited by A. von Miaskowski. Dr. Waentig traces the influence of Comte on the French, German, and English schools of political economy and sociology, referring in particular to the views of Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. The work has a full bibliography, but no index.

* * *

The Report of the Celebration of the Sixtieth Birthday of Professor Ernst Haeckel, February 17, 1894, recently published, contains a beautiful photogravure of the marble bust of Haeckel presented on this occasion, and now permanently stationed in the Jena Zoological Institute.

* * *

Moleschott's heirs have given his valuable library, containing over forty thousand medical, scientific, and philosophical works, to the Academy at Turin, where the teacher began his labors.

* * *

Slaves to Duty is the title of a sixpenny pamphlet by John Badcock, junr., published by Reeves & Co., 185 Fleet-street. Mr. Badcock holds that the pretence of duty is an instrument of slavery held over the weaker, and especially women, to induce needless self-sacrifice for the benefit of others.

* * *

Messrs. Macmillan & Co. announce a new English translation of the *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, with an Introduction on his place in philosophy, by Principal Rendall, of the University College, Liverpool. There are already numerous translations of this great classic, from the early ones of Casaubon and Collier to that by the late George Long, which last it will be difficult to beat.

* * *

Miss Anna Swanwick, who is known to the literary world by her translations of Goethe and Æschylus, is seeing through the press a work on *Evolution and the Religion of the Future*, which she views from a Broad Church Theistic standpoint.

* * *

The British Museum has purchased a book which had long been given up for lost, the *Essortatione al Timor di Dio*, by the Italian reformer Acontius, engineer to Queen Elizabeth, seen in modern times, if seen at all, only by Chauffepié, the continuator of Bayle, and deplored as hopelessly lost by M. Gaston Bonet-Maury (*Des Origines du Christianisme Unitaire chez les Anglais*). The museum has, nevertheless, had the great good fortune to obtain a copy of this tract interesting on the author's account and its own, and especially so to Englishmen, from being printed in London about 1580 by "Giovanni Wolfio, Servitore de l'Illustrissimo Signor Filippo Sidnei," and as containing two Italian canzoni and a sonnet addressed to Queen Elizabeth.

HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER.

THE infinite nothing, Jehovah the Ghost,
Condensed to a sentient, unfortunate host,
Just all for the pleasure of seeing them roast—
For his mercy endureth for ever.

Creation he cunningly *planned* to contain
Disproofs of "Design," to a man with a brain;
And damns those who see them to infinite pain—
For his mercy endureth for ever.

When Eve in the orchard the apples did pluck,
The God who tabooed them ran madly amuck;
He blasted and cursed, and his curses have stuck—
For his mercy endureth for ever.

The Lord was enraged with the *blood-guiltless* Cain
For offering harmless fruit, cabbage, and grain,
Instead of an animal writhing in pain—
For his mercy endureth for ever.

God published a tale of a girl and a ghost,
Of devils in pigs, and his son on a post,
And ordered our race to believe it or roast—
For his mercy endureth for ever.

This scheme of redemption is only a sham,
No sensible man can believe in the lamb;
God means all his sensible creatures to damn—
For his mercy endureth for ever.

The blackest conception of all that's accurst;
The vilest reflection of man at his worst,
Was Yahveh the bloated, whom Science has burst,
And reduced to a by-word for ever.
G. L. MACKENZIE.

JONAH AND HIS WHALE.

WE are sometimes told by Christian Evidence advocates that sceptics are in error in ridiculing the story of Jonah and the whale: for, although whales cannot swallow men, sharks can, and the Hebrew text says the Lord prepared a great fish, דג, *day*, and, of course, he prepared its throat and interior to afford ample accommodation for the prophet. Here, as usual, the Christian Evidence men desert their authority when it suits them, for it is the blessed Jesus, or the evangelist reporting in his name, who says that Jonah "was three days and three nights in the whale's belly" (Matt. xii. 10), using the word *κῆτος*, which signifies a whale. Jonah was sailing from Joppa to Tarshesh when the storm arose, which was miraculously appeased by throwing him overboard. Whales do not cruise about the Mediterranean, though sharks are common enough. But, whether whale or shark, it must have taken an extraordinary voyage to land the prophet at the inland city of Nineveh, unless it went overland. The only water way would be back the whole length of the Mediterranean to Gibraltar, thence all round Africa *via* the Cape of Good Hope to the Persian Gulf, and so up to River Tigris, till past Bagdad it becomes a narrow stream.

But the term *day*, which is used in the Talmud for the Messiah, and may mean only "preserver," is one which indicates the mythological character of the narrative. Lycophron, the Greek poet, tells a similar yarn of how the hero Hercules, the mighty Leonticide, son of Jove, was swallowed by a shark, and was called Trihesperus or Trinox, because he remained three dark days in the belly of the fish. The original meaning of the myth was probably astronomical. Jonah and Jesus were both signs of the resurrection of physical nature. LUCIANUS.

This is the style of a country parson of the last century. After the service is read he begins: "I publish the banns of marriage between Cornelius Hale, bachelor, and Tamzin Craddock, spinster, both of this parish. If any of you know cause or just impediment why these two simpletons should not be joined together in wedlock, ye are to declare it. This is the second time of asking, and I hope, before the third, seeing that Tamzin is in my own service, and well-off, and Cornelius can't keep himself sober, let alone a wife, they'll have got into a more reasonable state of mind. There'll be no sermon to-day, because I had to sit up all night with my cow that is sick, and I can't afford to lose her these hard times. But it doesn't matter, for I've not seen one bit of improvement in the parish (especially among the farmers) since my last; and as that did not bring them to their senses, I don't know what will."

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

The Bible command is to seek the kingdom of God first with the promise that food, drink, clothes, and all the necessaries of life will be furnished gratis afterwards. If anyone will inform the world how men can win this kingdom, there will be swarms of candidates for admission. The kingdom of God is on the continent of common sense, and the key to it is to take care of yourself.—*L. K. Washburn.*

You are finally saved by what you possess in yourself, not by what others possess for you, or, possessing, are willing to grant you on loan at interest. But the desiderata are men and women to whom courage and spontaneity are every-day habits of life—who do not qualify, who do not apologise—who love to get to roots and see a principle in full play rather than to finger and toy with the leafage of the tree or with the fringe of the garment.—*Horace L. Traubel.*

When we come to consider how short a period has been occupied by the development of the civilisation of mankind, as compared with prehistoric periods, and to what a very small portion of the earth's surface this development extends; when we further bear in mind what vast horizons are being opened up on all sides by the advance of science, knowledge, and industry; when we remember how much we still retain in our refined life of the crude tendencies and instincts of our barbarous past, and how the savage "struggle for existence" handed down to us from animal life still rages as bad as ever, though in a modified shape, we feel compelled to admit that our civilisation is still altogether in its infancy, and that we have as yet traversed but a small portion of the path marked out for us.—*Büchner.*

It is becoming, if it has not become, impossible for men of clear intellect and adequate instruction to believe, and it has ceased, or is ceasing, to be possible for such men honestly to say they believe, that the universe came into being in the fashion described in the first chapter of Genesis; or to accept, as a literal truth, the story of the making of woman, with the account of the catastrophe which followed hard upon it in the second chapter; or to admit that the earth was re-peopled with terrestrial inhabitants by immigration from Armenia or Kurdistan, little more than four thousand years ago, which is implied in the eighth chapter; or, finally, to shape their conduct in accordance with the conviction that the world is haunted by innumerable demons, who take possession of men, and may be driven out of them by exorcistic adjurations, which pervade the Gospels.—*Professor Huxley.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Righteous wife (at breakfast)—"Henry, will you ask a blessing?" Henry (examining hash)—"We've blessed everything here before, dear."

Isaacs—"Ah! Dis *Huguenots* is de kind of opera dot likes me vell. De Catholics and de Protestants dey fights all de vile, and de Jew he makes de music."

"Florrie, my child," said her grandmother, as the girl was curling her hair in beautiful ringlets, "if God Almighty had intended your hair to be curled, he would have done it himself."

"We don't play the piano at our house on Sunday," said the first little girl, "and you folks do. We ain't heathens." "Neither are we," said the second little girl, "but we don't believe in usin' up all our religion on Sunday, so's there won't be none left through the week, like some folks does."

Mudge—"Went to church, yesterday, just for a change." Yabsley—"So? What denomination?" Mudge—"The minister, as near as I could figure him out, was a platitudinarian." Yabsley—"That's Low Church; High Church, Attitudinarian; Broad Church, Latitudinarian; Low Church, Platitudinarian."

Bob—"Hullo, Bill! How was that there sickler lecture last night?" Bill—"No good, Bob." Bob—"Why?" Bill—"Oh, that there duffer, he said that prair ain't no account." Bob—"What! Why gosh, 'fut wasn't fer prayer we couldn't have a darn bit of fun in meetin'. I'm in fer it." Bill—"You bet, Bob, and the longer the better."

Visiting minister (to unregenerate parishioner)—"Ah, my dear brother, I have talked to you many, many times, but to-day I am come to ask you directly to give yourself to Christ." Parishioner—"Well, Mr. Whimper, I'm very sorry, but you are a little too soon. This is house-cleaning week, and I really don't think it's worth while trying to give myself to anyone but the devil till I have finished with the carpet-tacks and stove-pipes."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.15, J. W. Martin, "The Relation of Secularism to Socialism." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 6, members' quarterly meeting; 7.30, H. Snell, "Socialism in Practice." (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing class. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club. CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 4.30, members' general meeting; 6, tea; 7, soirée. Thursday, science class. WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House): 8.30, members' meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. Guest, "What Religion Does and Does Not Do."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory."

DEPTFORD (Broadway): 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Mansions in the Sky." KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, W. Heaford will lecture.

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney will lecture. VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15, H. Vining, "Rome and Freethought."

WALTHAMSTOW (Markhouse-road): 3, debate between J. Boyce and C. J. Hunt, "Is there a God?"

WESTMINSTER (Old Pimlico Pier): 11.30, F. Haslam, "The English Reformation: What we have Gained and What we have Lost by It."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, C. James, "What think ye of Christ?"; 7, C. James, "The Gospel of Secularism."

COUNTRY.

BELFAST (Crown Chambers' Hall, 64 Royal-avenue): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Church and Science"; 3.30, "Christianity and Social Life"; evening, "Miracles and Medicine."

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BLACKBURN: 3, business meeting at secretary's house. DERBY (Friar Gate Coffee Tavern): Monday, at 7.30, J. R. Wright, "The Art of Reasoning."

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, members' meeting; 2.30, concert; 6.30, J. Harkis, "Is there a God?"

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, N. B. Billany will lecture. LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, quarterly meeting of Tontine Society; 3, Philosophy Class (inaugural address by Ernest Newman); 7, John Roberts, "James Thomson (B.V.)."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Mr. Hammond, "Nebulous Christianity." (Free.)

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East): 7, Carl Aarstad, "God before the Judgment Seat of Man."

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 3, Class, "Origin of Species"; 6.30, committee; 7, a meeting. Wednesday and Saturday, at 8, dancing.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Philip Braham, "Science and Education"; 7, "Astronomy: Fixed Stars and Astronomical Measurements" (with illuminated and other illustrations).

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Humanity's Outlook"; 7, "From Christianity to Secularism."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street): 7, the Secretary, "Christianity and Slavery."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNESLEY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "Is there a God?"; 6.30, "Is the Bible True?"

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

ROCHDALE (Town Hall-square): 11, Sam Standing, "Voluntary or Board Schools: Which?"; 3, "Historic Churches: 1, The Roman Catholic"; 6.30, "Pilgrim's Progress.—I."; 8, business meeting at Toad-lane.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market-place): 3, C. Cohen will lecture.

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