

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

ROME IN ENGLAND.

"I am aware that the art of printing will always present an insurmountable barrier to the total and absolute subjection of the human mind; but when I consider the cunning and the wiles which were successfully practised in former ages by a knavish and interested Priesthood to subject even thrones to its insolent domination, I am not without fears that the modern attempts to reduce mankind to that dreadful state of vassalage under which they groaned, particularly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, may in some degree prove successful. Even should the Romish clergy succeed in obtaining *half* the power which they exercised at these periods, it would be a matter, in my apprehension, which every true friend of liberty ought to deplore; for I have universally observed in my perusal of history that the increase of ignorance and oppression always kept pace with the increase of clerical power."—*William Cobbett, "Register," vol. xxvi., pp. 312, 313.*

THE opening of the new Roman Catholic cathedral at Brompton this week calls renewed attention to the advance of Roman Catholicism in England. Measured by numbers, that advance is not alarming. A leakage from its membership to some extent compensates for its conversions, mostly made from those apists of papists, the Ritualists. But in wealth and influence it is constantly progressing. Its proselytes are mostly drawn from the well-to-do. Men like the Duke of Norfolk and the Marquis of Bute offer it almost unlimited financial resources. As an establishment it has grown vastly in half a century. In 1845 it had 776 priests in England; now it has three thousand. Then it had 622 churches, now three times that number; then thirty-eight nunneries, now two hundred and forty; then thirty-four religious houses, now close on five hundred; while its colleges have increased from two to thirty-six.

Considered as a divine institution, Romanism is abominably absurd. It is founded on obsolete dogmas and mistakes which civilised man has outgrown, and it has maintained its authority by the most detestable crimes and cruelties. But regarded as a human institution, Romanism is worth study. It represents the survival of the fittest elements of many ancient faiths. Its worst institutions had value in building up a powerful corporation. Sacerdotal celibacy centres the minds and affections of its ministers on their Church, and prevents the dissipation of their property to children. Confession gives it a hold over domestic life. Saint and image worship satisfy popular wants for the concrete and near, rather than the abstract and remote deity of Protestants. Purgatory offers an inexhaustible supply of wealth to the priest, and a more natural theory of after-life than eternal heaven and hell. The Virgin Mother unites symbols that come home to the affections, and gives woman a place in worship unsupplied by the bachelor Trinity. The Roman Church service appeals to the senses, and its boasted infallibility gives repose to the mind.

Above all, the Church has thriven by its perpetual readiness to compound with popular weakness and

superstition for the sake of its own dominion. The Romish Church is the outcome of the cunning schemes of thousands of men who kept, as far as possible, all knowledge in their own corporation, in order that it might rule over the ignorant. Hence it is that, though stained with the blood of myriad martyrs, and laden with the frauds and forgeries of ages, it yet holds on; and Macaulay could look forward to the Church still existing in undiminished vigor, "when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruin of St. Paul's."

Rome knows its power consists in the control of education; hence its unceasing fight for the schools. The Jesuits have everywhere bent themselves to the highest of tasks, that of moulding men. It was their schools opened in Germany after the Reformation that furnished the soldiers for the Thirty Years' Religious War. Everywhere the same men are now training the young for a new crusade, ostensibly against "Freemasonry, Libertinism, and Naturalism," whereby they mean Freethought and civil liberty. They talk now of the Christian State, and even of Christian Socialism; but they mean, as of old, the subjection of the world to the dominion of the Church.

Semper Eadem is the motto of Romanism. What it has done it would do again if it had the power. Nature chained is not nature changed. The root principles of religion not only justify the suppression of heresy, they demand it. If I am leading hundreds to eternal torment, it is a mercy to stamp me out as speedily as possible. A real change of circumstances has led to a pretended change of policy. Rome now speaks of toleration, but it means supremacy. It pretends to patronise science, but it encourages superstition. It exalts faith and discredits reason. Men like Mr. Benjamin Kidd and the Hon. A. J. Balfour are in this its unwitting allies. It presents the logical ultimatum of their depreciation of reason before authority. All priests find in Rome their instinct for sacerdotal sway embodied; and, as Protestantism breaks up, the more consistent Church, boldly proclaiming that there is no standing ground between Atheism and submission to herself, is bound to gather up those who, from whatever cause, prefer authority to reason.

England's conversion is now the dominant thought of Rome. England is, in the language of the Propaganda, "St. Mary's Dowry" and "the patrimony of Peter." The Pope's letter is being followed up by an organised attempt to bring Britain back to "the faith of our fathers." Should disestablishment come, a large portion of our Romanising High Church clergy will be prepared to accept Romish orders, in the hope that Romanism will become the rever-sionary legatee of the Anglican Church.

In the face of the advance of Catholicism, it behoves Freethinkers to close up their ranks and fight superstition, not simply with the guerilla warfare of free lances, but with compact and well-drilled organisation. With a tithe of Romish funds, Freethinkers would soon prevent any fear of Romish encroachments. Is it not a shame that, while a Church that has erected the worst despotism that ever bound and crushed not only the bodies, but also the minds of men, can draw immense wealth to itself by holding out threats of hell-fire, and by pretending to save the dead from purgatory, the endowment of Freethought halls, designed to unshackle the minds of men and to combat superstition, is not permitted by law? Surely Freethinkers should be up and doing. The days of struggle are not yet over.

J. M. WHEELER.

MRS. BESANT'S NEW GOD.

(Concluded from page 385.)

MRS. BESANT, as already explained, has a "God," like all the rest of the mystery-mongers; and she proceeds to "justify" her deity, who requires it as much as any other god or godling in the whole pantheon. And the justification of the god of Theosophy is remarkably like that of the common god of Theism. All these systems find themselves confronted with the problem of evil, and set about explaining it, but not until they are driven into doing so by sceptical opposition. The first explanation advanced had the merit of sublime simplicity. Divines declared evil to be a mystery. But sceptics retorted that this was only a confession of ignorance, and did not help in the least. It left the problem unsolved, and calling it by a grand name did not make it a bit plainer. Besides, the "mystery" was, after all, quite artificial; it was really no more than a flat contradiction between the theory of "God" and the facts of nature. When this point was pressed home, the theologians saw that they must somehow prove that evil is really good; and thus they reached the serene quackery of ultimate optimism, declaring that discord is misunderstood harmony, that a man groaning with the toothache is unconsciously sounding his note in the symphony of universal happiness. This theory still holds the field, only it is modified by a "wrinkle" borrowed from Evolution. Evil is not exactly good, the divines tell us, but it is good in the making; and when we get to the end of the process (if we ever do!) we shall look back, like Jehovah upon his six-days' creation, and pronounce it all "good." Of course the argument is based upon prophecy; it is like paying an account with a very long bill, due sometime after death or forty days after the millennium. Still, it serves the purpose; the Micawbers of theology exclaim, "Thank God, that's settled!" And the Micawber family is large, and Mrs. Besant is one of them. She meets her difficulties in relation to evil by resorting, not to the vindication of the day of judgment, but to the final disclosures of reincarnation. We shall not, however, follow her into that region, but stick to the prosaic world of things as they are now—the world of actual experience, of more or less exact knowledge, and of more or less approximate logic.

Let us examine Mrs. Besant's theory of the function of pain, apart from its apparatus and jargon of Theosophy.

"By pain we learn when we have struck against a law, and the law which pierced us when we opposed it becomes our strength when we place ourselves in harmony with it. By pain we learn to distinguish between the eternal and the transitory, and so to strike our heart-roots into that which endures. By pain we develop strength, as the athlete develops muscle by exercising it against opposing weights. By pain we learn sympathy, and gain power to help those who suffer. Thus only is the Christ-soul developed and at length perfected, and when this is once realised pain is no longer grievous nor an enemy, but a sternly gracious friend, whose hands are full of gifts."

Now, we entirely dissent from this philosophy, which appears to us the very reverse of the truth. "Adversity (says George Meredith) tries us; it does not nourish us." Mrs. Besant has mistaken the trial for the nourishment. A child does not grow strong in darkness, privation, and suffering; it grows strong in sunlight, plenty, and happiness. When adversity comes, it does not give strength; it only tests the strength that has been acquired in prosperity. We do not deny that pain is useful in one way, as a warning against danger. But the danger is itself an evil, the proof being that we try to avoid it; and the usefulness of the warning depends on our ability to shun the danger. There is no use at all in pain when a little child falls against the fire, and is burnt in its helplessness; nor is there any use in pain when a man is cremated alive because he differs from other people on religious questions.

Mrs. Besant draws a fallacious analogy between the athlete and the sufferer. In the first place, the athlete does not suffer; generally speaking, he takes a pleasure in his exercises and performances. In the next place, no man gains any strength from bearing pain, although he may gain strength by exerting himself against the causes of pain. In the third place, the very idea of an athlete is active, while the very idea of a sufferer is passive. Man is

the victim of pain, and if he bears it willingly, in a spirit of self-sacrifice, he bears it for the sake of some other victim.

Certainly we learn sympathy by pain. But that is only one illustration of a general law—namely, that we learn sympathy by experience. And the very fact that there is such a strong tendency to associate sympathy with suffering shows how pain and weakness have predominated in human experience. There are a hundred persons ready to help a child when it is in distress for one who will play with it and enter into its child-life. The sympathy of delight is far rarer than the sympathy of sorrow.

The final sentence of Mrs. Besant's panegyric on pain is wonderfully like the stock language of Christian divines. Pain, forsooth, is the great agency of moral and spiritual culture. Well, if it is, there is something wrong with its distribution. The poor, who have little time and means for sinning, get the most of it; and the wealthy, who have plenty of time and means, get the least. The "sternly-gracious friend, whose hands are full of gifts," is a pretty figure of rhetoric; but, as a matter of fact, pain is the colleague of death, and joy is the colleague of life.

This is clearly admitted, although not intentionally, in Mrs. Besant's final paragraph, wherein she declares that man is "to grow upward, to become the Christ in strength not in weakness, triumphant not crucified." Which is a confession that pain is an evil, although a necessary evil. But then the question arises—What made it necessary? And the only answer Mrs. Besant can give is—The will of God. The deity could have started man strong instead of weak; triumphant, instead of crucified. That is what every father would do for his children, if he could. God could, but he did not. Yet we have to listen to eloquent nonsense about his benevolence.

Mrs. Besant's philosophy of pain will not stand the test of criticism. She cannot justify her "God" by appealing to the past or the present. She is only safe when she appeals to the future. No one can contradict her then. At the same time, no one is bound to believe her. There may be reincarnation for all of us; but, also, there may not be. What we have to do is to judge by the known, not by the unknown; by experience, not by speculation. Bring theology down to the test of fact, and it fails miserably. All it can do at the finish is to exclaim, like the gentleman in the melodrama—"No matter, the time will come!" In other words, "God" is an object of faith—whether it be the god of Christianity or of Theosophy. To vindicate him at the bar of reason is to subject him to a painful humiliation.

G. W. FOOTE.

MORALITY WITHOUT RELIGION.

Is morality possible without religion? By morality we mean the principles which rule and regulate the actions, customs, and general habits of mankind; and the word "religion" is here used in its ecclesiastical sense, as representing Theistic beliefs which are said to be professed by a majority of the human race. Considerable difference of opinion obtains among theologians as to whether the two—morality and religion—are necessarily identical. Some hold that man is born with a God-given capacity to distinguish right from wrong; others urge that it is only in the Bible that the proper guides to human action can be found. But many of the Professors at our Universities have discovered, during the past two decades, that it can no longer be consistently maintained that wisdom speaketh to her children only through the Hebrew or Christian records. The practical question, however, here to be considered is: Can moral conduct exist, and pure and noble lives be led, without the aid of the Christian religion? Of course we do not wish to convey the impression that, in our opinion, there is no morality taught in the New Testament; but we do contend that whatever is of ethical value in that book is not peculiar to Christianity.

Nothing appears to us more clearly demonstrated from history and personal experience than the fact that religion and morality were distinct in their origin, and that in many important instances they have remained so in their development. The first forms of supernatural religion of which we have any record originated in fear and the prostration of reason, while morality was the outcome of

intellectual culture and thoughtful experience. This truth has been clearly shown in an able book, *The Morals of Evolution*, by the Rev. Minot J. Savage. On page thirty-one he observes: "Religion and morality were totally distinct in their origin. At first they had nothing to do with each other. Religion was simply an arrangement between man and his gods, by which he was to gain their favor or ward off their wrath. Morality, on the other hand, is a matter of behavior between man and man." On pages twenty-four and twenty-five Mr. Savage says: "Go far enough back into antiquity to come to the time when large numbers of men were fetish worshippers; when the object of their adoration, their reverence, or fear is a stick, or a stone, or a reptile. Of course, you will understand in a moment that the worship of an object like this cannot be associated in the mind of a worshipper with any necessity for telling the truth, with any necessity for being pure, with any necessity for being charitable and kind towards his fellows." The same principle is enforced in the case of the Indian devotee who fasts and torments himself, not that he may benefit mankind morally by his sufferings, but solely in order that he may acquire favor and power with the gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Seeva. Such a man is very religious, but he is not necessarily a moral man; for, if his fellow men were to emulate his example, the human race would be enervated if it did not become extinct.

That religion does not always ensure the practice of morality, the Bible itself testifies. Take the conduct of Noah, with his drunkenness and injustice; of Abraham with his cruelty to Hagar and her child; of Jacob with his many wives; of Moses and his relentless wars; of Joshua and his merciless slaughters; of Samuel's cold-blooded murder of Agag; of David, whose career was one of incessant crime and hypocrisy; of Solomon with his licentiousness; of Peter, who was not particular to avoid falsehood, or of St. Paul, whose honesty was not unimpeachable. Now, all these men are regarded as having been religious; but who will attempt to defend their actions as being moral? And in our own time, under the very banner of the cross, Christians have defended the most immoral deeds. Who does not remember those iniquitous wars which took place in Zululand and Afghanistan a few years ago? Did not Christian bishops, from their seats in Parliament, openly express their approval of a cold-blooded and sanguinary policy, which brought down upon the nation the opprobrium due to the cowardly and uncalled-for attacker and despoiler of the weak, the unprotected, and the semi-savage; a policy which led to national suffering, national poverty, national degradation and humiliation, and which caused the blush of shame to mantle the cheek of every true-hearted Englishman? Even Mr. Gladstone publicly declared his sorrow at finding so many of his co-religionists going woefully, fatally wrong in matters of national morality. His words were: "To my great pain and disappointment, I have found during the last three years that thousands of Churchmen supplied the great mass of those who have gone lamentably wrong upon questions involving deeply the interests of truth, justice, and humanity. I should hear with much comfort any satisfactory explanation of this very painful circumstance."

These instances should be sufficient to convince any impartial mind of the fallacy of the theologian's assertion that we owe our morality to religion. The lesson of ecclesiastical history is that religion never did necessarily ensure moral conduct, or inspire useful deeds. If it be asked why Christians are more active at present in promoting the public welfare than were their predecessors; why Christianity is more humane than it was at the time of the Inquisition and the Star Chamber; or why to-day its professors deprecate offences which a few centuries ago the Church sought to condone, the answer is that a higher moral sense obtains now than in former times. The desire to practise love, benevolence, and mutual toleration (in a word, morality) has grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength, until the theologian's statement as to the ethical force of religion has been reversed, so that we find it is morality that has purified religion, not religion that has purified morality.

As regards the contention that God originally endowed man with power to discover moral truth, it is open to the three following objections: (1) The case of Adam, as recorded in Genesis, contradicts the assumption, for it was

not until after he went wrong that he found out what was good and what was evil. (2) If man already knew what to do and what to avoid, there was no necessity for the Old and New Testaments to tell him. (3) We have learnt only by experience and education what tends to the honor and welfare of our race. It is by these means that the human family have been able to emerge from their original state of barbarism. Experience and careful study have demonstrated that moral progress does not depend upon any theological belief, but rather upon the proper exercise and development of our intellectual powers. The great Roman statesman and philosopher, Cicero, taught that man's morality was the necessary result of reasoning built upon human necessities. Robert Owen gave practical meaning and force to this teaching by inculcating principles the legitimate adoption of which would probably end in the establishment of a world wherein human character should be formed upon principles based upon right-knowing and right-doing, upon the expulsion of ignorance and the removal of the causes of evil. The only religion of the future which will be worthy of the name as a binding system, will be one in which the good of all faiths shall be retained, and from which their errors shall be eliminated; a religion based, not upon supernatural figments and allegories, but upon the eternal laws of nature and the laws of that great kingdom of human nature whose only monarch is man. It is he who must be regarded as the real actor in the great drama of existence, if we wish to adorn life with ethical value and practical utility.

The fact that human sympathy and affection are developed in all lands, under various systems of government and different forms of religion; that virtue in all its forms was practised by so-called "heathens" long before the time of Christ, ought to be sufficient to show that we are not dependent upon the Christian faith for the cultivation of the better part of our natures. It is said that Christianity introduced new motives and sanctions. But what were they? The motives were the hope of heaven and the fear of hell, which are selfish in the extreme, and far below many of the incentives offered by the ancient philosophers. As to supernatural sanctions, they have but little or no practical influence upon the majority of people, who are actuated in daily life more by mundane considerations than by what may happen "beyond the grave."

It is strangely overlooked, by certain students of history, that emotion without knowledge, feeling without reason, ruled the world when man was really in his intellectual infancy, and then morality was at its lowest ebb. When, however, the human intellect was cultivated, and mental freedom illuminated the mind of man, morality developed, and superstition and the power of the Church proportionately declined.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE PRIEST IN POLITICS.

It has often been remarked in these columns that the struggle in Ireland between the Parnellites and the nominally Nationalist party was one which was interesting to Freethinkers, in that it seemed to foreshadow the partial revolt at least of some of the more enlightened of Irishmen against the growing and ever-threatening arrogance of the Catholic Church. Revolutions at first are not always strictly logical, or at least are not thoroughly defensible on strictly logical grounds. Thus Protestantism is notoriously inconsequential. The claim for the right of private judgment up to a certain point, and the rejection of the claim beyond that point, is absurd. In the same way, the Parnellite claim, that priests have the right to dogmatise on questions of "faith and morals," but not on questions of politics, is indefensible. Yet, as the air clears, we see where we stand, and the pioneers are naturally less able to perceive the drift of their work than those who look back after a long time on what has been accomplished.

Some day the whole story of the priestly intrigue, which succeeded in driving Mr. Parnell from power into an early grave, may be told; and an interesting story it will be. But one thing stands clear in the matter. The Church, in one sense, chose her own ground. It was she who

precipitated the fight. And really the Parnellites were forced into the conflict with the Church originally. Parnell was too diplomatic and too opportune a tactician not to avail himself of any help or of any force he could. As long, therefore, as the priests—by force of public opinion—were compelled to follow and aid him, Parnell accepted their services. And so, after the crisis of 1890, Mr. Parnell would not have been the man to commence a gratuitous fight against so powerful a body as the Irish priests. It was they, therefore, who made the fight a question of religion, and used every engine which such an organisation as the Catholic Church possesses to force clerical nominees on the electorate. Priests swamped the Federation meetings, priests blackened the political platforms, priests stood on the hustings, priests flooded the national conventions, priests patrolled the voting-stations, priests swarmed into the polling-booths—they almost stood over the ballot-boxes. Can it be wondered at that Parnell was beaten, that even he went down under such a weight as no man could bear? Great men can do much, but no man is equal to all the world. Napoleon could win battles against enormous odds over and over again. But Napoleon could not stand for ever against a world in arms. The world is greater than any one man. And Parnell—whose name there is nothing outrageous in bracketing with Napoleon's—learnt the same lesson. Parnell worked wonders in that nine months in '91. Another man would not have lasted a week; he stood for the best part of a dreadful year. Nay, if it had been possible for him to have taken care of himself more and husbanded his nerves, he would probably to-day be on the crest of a wave which would carry him back to his old position.

However, to come more directly to the way in which priestly influence is manipulated, there is a recent instance to hand which illustrates it admirably. But it is necessary to state a few circumstances first. It must, then, be explained that Dublin is strongly and, in fact, enthusiastically Parnellite. Four out of the nine Parnellite members sit for Dublin seats. The fact is noteworthy, inasmuch as Dublin is naturally less priest-ridden than the rural districts. But it remains—from whatever cause—Dublin is Parnellite. Now, it is an important thing for the Church to capture as many seats for Poor Law Guardians as possible. If there is a Catholic majority on the Board of the Union, they can get all foundlings registered as Catholics. Whether a child, therefore, will be damned or saved depends on the voting of Tom, Dick, and Harry at the elections. However, in Ireland every election down to town-commissioners, or petty local boards of guardians, is fought on questions of national politics. It was Nationalist *versus* Unionist at the Parliamentary election; it was Nationalist *versus* Unionist at the Municipal election; it was Nationalist *versus* Unionist at every election. This is but natural where the national issue overshadows all smaller local issues. But when the Parnell crisis came there was another sub-division. And we had Parnellite, Anti-Parnellite, and Unionist. Now, the Unionist as a rule was a Protestant; the Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites were Catholics. There were numerous exceptions, of course, especially on the Nationalist side, many Nationalists being Protestants. But, as a broad rule, the political division was also a religious division—perhaps the latter was really the cause of the former. Hence, though the Church denounced the Parnellites, it would prefer a Catholic Parnellite as Poor Law Guardian to a Protestant Unionist; for the Catholic Parnellite would serve the purpose of helping to make a Catholic majority on the Board, whilst his Parnellism would be, in the circumstances, merely academic.

And now comes the point. At the Poor Law elections in Dublin there were in some cases Catholic Anti-Parnellites running against Catholic Parnellites, the possible effect of which would be to let in the Protestant Unionist. And as the Parnellites, being in a great majority, as I have said, in Dublin, claimed the seats, it was necessary to draw off the Catholic Anti-Parnellites rather than let the seats fall into the enemy's hands. The Church, in short, had to choose the lesser of two evils. And so Archbishop Walsh addressed a letter to the press, from which the following are extracts:—

"I am distressed to hear, in connection with the coming Poor-Law elections, that there is danger of some confusion being caused by the action of some apparently

over-zealous persons in putting forward, in one or two instances, a number of Catholic candidates in excess of the number of vacancies to be filled. If the contest lay merely between Catholic candidates, the variety of choice thus offered to the electors would seem quite free from objection, and might even have its advantages. But I understand that the policy of starting rival Catholic candidatures is now being acted upon under wholly different circumstances, where it may expose the Catholic vote to the risk of ruinous division in face of a solidly-united vote at the other side."

"In the peculiar circumstances of our Poor-Law Administration the religious interests of our Catholic poor are seriously at stake in almost every election of Poor-Law Guardians that takes place in Dublin. Therefore, I cannot but feel called upon to express my dissent from the mistaken action of those who, under the influence of zeal for the advancement of any political interest, would jeopardise the election of those candidates to whose care the religious, as well as all other, interests of the poor may safely be entrusted.

"From some things I have come to know of, I can have little doubt that there are places in Ireland where the conflict, even as it now exists, turns largely upon issues that lie at the very root of Catholicity. But I have to do only with Dublin. As regards Dublin, so far as my knowledge of public affairs extends, the conflict, in the various forms in which it has made itself in any way seriously felt amongst us since the tragic day of Mr. Parnell's death in October, 1891, has turned upon issues that are either exclusively political or exclusively personal.

"Upon such issues, as upon any others in the whole wide field of merely political or personal controversy, it surely is open to Catholics, in so far as regards their religious duty, to range themselves at one side or at the other, according as the one side or the other commends itself the more to their personal judgment. The one vital moral issue, the importance of which, as a matter of Catholic principle, necessarily outweighed that of all other issues in the case, has, through the course of events, long since disappeared from its old place of prominence in the dispute.

"If the present disastrous political division amongst our people is to be kept up, I for one feel bound to see that no opportunity is given to keep it up here under cover of any appeal to religious duty."

This letter was dated March 8, '95, and the net purport of it all was that the Catholic Anti-Parnellite candidates were to be withdrawn. But, naturally, the Parnellite press trumpeted the letter as a vindication of their policy; they alleged that it was practically the capitulation of the enemy. And inasmuch as the Parnellites in the country had been greatly persecuted and thwarted by the priests, Archbishop Walsh's letter was circulated with its declaration that the issue is now "either exclusively political or exclusively personal."

Now comes the second act, or rather a sequel which casts a curious light on priestly diplomacy and priestly "honor." It is necessary again to explain. A few weeks ago Mr. John Sweetman, the Anti-Parnellite member for East Wicklow, created a sensation by resigning his seat because he was dissatisfied with the want of back-bone displayed by the McCarthyite party in the House. It is not necessary here to enter into his reasons, but in a singularly straightforward letter to his constituents he explained that he could not consent to keep trooping through the lobbies keeping a Government in office which had admittedly lost its mandate and was powerless to legislate for Ireland. Mr. Sweetman offered, however, to stand again as a Parnellite. The Parnellite party accepted him as their candidate, and the campaign in Wicklow—one of the most charming counties in the United Kingdom—commenced. It is to be presumed that the Parnellite electioneers—in order to disarm clerical intimidation—spread about copies of Archbishop Walsh's letter declaring that the issue was purely a political one. In this way it is possible that a great force which was used on the Anti-Parnellite side at the General Election would have been destroyed. But Archbishop Walsh may not be completely forgetful of past services. The Anti-Parnellites helped the Church before; the Church can return the compliment. The difficulty was the existence of the previous letter. So Archbishop Walsh addressed another letter to the papers. The important passages I quote:—

"DEAR SIR,—I had hardly arrived in Dublin this evening when I happened to hear of a mischievously misleading statement which, it seems, has been in-

dustriously circulated during the last few days throughout the eastern division of the County of Wicklow.

"The constituency so inopportunately plunged at this Easter time into the excitement of an electoral contest, by the resignation of its representative in Parliament, lies within this diocese of Dublin. The statement which I hasten to contradict is to the effect that it is my wish that the priests of the various parishes throughout the constituency should abstain from all interference in the coming contest.

"I am very far, indeed, from wishing anything of the kind. It has always been my desire that the priests of this diocese should exercise to the fullest extent their natural and legitimate influence in all public affairs.

"I trust that on the present most critical occasion the priests of Wicklow will not fail in their public duty."

The meaning of this letter is plain. A nod is as good as a word, as they say. The priests, of course, were not *ordered* to interfere; they were *left free*. The effect of the letter need hardly be dwelt on. The previous declaration of March had served its turn; it had captured the Catholic seats in Dublin, under cover of soft words as to the indifference with which the Church viewed the whole question. In April the muzzle was taken off the priests, the former letter was nulled practically, and it was trusted that the priests "will not fail in their public duty." This is the Church—higgling and bargaining in the political market, swallowing to-day what it said yesterday, like the lowest political charlatan—whose "honor" could not tolerate Parnell. Of course the object of it all is plain to any observant man. Now that Parnell is gone, it is not so much Parnellism or Anti-Parnellism the Church cares for. Practically it is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. What she really wants is to get the control of Irish politics into her own hands. It is to be hoped that the Irish people will be sufficiently alive to their own interests, and sufficiently mindful of past history, to frustrate that design. For it would mean the "running" of Ireland in the interests of the clerical ring; and the welfare and aspirations of the Irish people would be wholly subordinated to the exigencies of the political ambitions of the papacy. Ireland, in fact, would become a mere counter in the game which the Vatican fondly desires to play in European politics. The triumph of the Church would be the final extinction of the hope of Irish liberty.

FREDERICK RYAN.

THE CHURCH AND MARRIAGE.

The hold that the Church still keeps upon the minds of the people is due less to belief in its theological dogmas than to the laws and customs that bring the clergy into relation with the people in every great event of life. In birth, marriage, baptism, affliction, and death the priest or minister has to be sought to perform legal rites, give consolation, or administer sacraments. This makes the clergy indispensable to a respectable life; and, to avoid legal disability or social contumely, people who are secretly opposed to religion give their outward support to the Church. In the province of Quebec the State comes to the aid of the Church by refusing to permit the civil registration of births, or to allow marriage by a magistrate, making the clergy indispensable in these matters, even to those who would have the courage to brave social opinion and do without the ministrations of the self-styled ambassadors of God. In Quebec a child has no legal existence, and is not deemed to have been born, unless a minister of religion certifies that it has been baptised by him, or has been acknowledged before him by the father.

As belief in dogma subsides, the clergy realise the importance of maintaining these laws and customs to prevent people from falling off from their support of the Church. Hence we see a growing disposition to enforce Sunday laws, which give to the clergy a business monopoly of one day in seven, and to insist on the necessity of clerical aid in the important functions of life. Persons who marry without priestly sanction are stigmatised as "adulterers," and those who are buried without clerical ceremonies are abused as "infidels," by those who have lost the expected burial fees and missed the prestige of recognition.

That the marriage edicts of the Romish Church are not founded upon divine authority is shown by the fact that

they can be set aside for money, which of course would not be the case were they commanded by God. There is no Bible saying that can be distorted into reading, "Thou shalt not marry unless thou payest to the priest five hundred dollars." Yet restrictions against the marriage of relatives are set aside upon payment of a fee "for kindred," as it is called. The evil effects of this priestly control may be illustrated by two examples. In a country village in Ontario a man became intimate with his cousin. Finding that a child was to be born, and desiring to protect his cousin from infamy, the man went to a priest to request him to perform the marriage ceremony. Learning that the parties were cousins, the priest refused his consent to the marriage unless he was paid \$500 "for kindred." This it was impossible to do; and, to avoid disgrace, drugs were administered which resulted in the girl's death, the Church thus being the indirect cause of murder.

In another case in the same district a man desired to marry his brother's widow. He applied to the priest, who refused to perform the ceremony of marriage except upon payment of \$500 "for kindred." Consulting a friend, a stratagem was suggested and acted out. The man waited upon the priest with the woman, who had adroitly enlarged her person. The man, with assumed shamefacedness, confessed "criminal intimacy," and, the eyes of the priest having verified the fact by a survey of the rotund form of the female, he kindly and humanely granted the dispensation. Fourteen months later the couple brought to the priest for baptism an infant of a few days. He performed the ceremony, but asked, in some perplexity, "What became of the other baby?" Then the man told him that the baby was a pillow, and he received such a lecture as the experience of a father confessor well enabled the priest to give. But the marriage had been secured, and the Church had caused the trick and lie. To protect morality, immorality had been caused. As long as the Church can secure legal and social recognition it will maintain its tyrannical control of the lives and fortunes of men, and it is necessary not only to disprove the dogmas of religion, but to destroy the legal prerogatives and social prestige of the clergy, before the "Church of Christ" will cease to be a hindrance to the progress of man.

To secure these results two courses are necessary. First, to work for repeal legislation, which will secularise the Church, make it pay taxes like honest people, and remove from it all civil authority, as has been done in France. Secondly, let men have the courage of their convictions and ignore the Church. If a man doesn't believe in baptism, let him refuse to have his child christened. If he doesn't believe in Jonah, let him not send his child to Sunday-school, where this fable is told as a fact. It is a shame that for the sake of entertainment or fashion children should be taught falsehoods that they will have to unlearn. If he is a Secularist, let him secure civil marriage, friendly consolation, and secular burial, and never acknowledge the existence of a class of men who, by a professional espousal of supernatural beliefs, are the enemies of mental advancement.

But it is useless as well as senseless to abuse the clergy personally for these evils. They are often sincere men, who are the victims of an erroneous education, or else they yield to the demand of the people, who offer them pay for services that the clergy know have no foundation in reason or natural right. It is the people themselves who are to blame, and the remedy is in their own hands. The Church would fall in a day should the people unitedly ignore its claims. Let those who are already so enlightened as to perceive the falsity of its pretences consistently refuse to lend their support. Their example will do more than any amount of teaching to deliver the world from the control of ecclesiastics.

In *Les Ruines* Volney imagines a judgment of the priests and rulers before a celestial tribunal. His words may be translated as follows:—

"What, then, teachers of the people, is it thus that you have deceived them?"

"And the disconcerted priests answered: 'O legislator! we are men; and the people are so superstitious! They have themselves provoked our errors.'

"And the kings said: 'O legislator! the people are so servile and so ignorant, they have prostrated themselves before the yoke that we hardly dared to show them.'

"Then the legislator, turning to the people, said:

'People, remember what you have just heard. These are two profound truths. Yes, you yourselves cause the evils of which you complain; it is you who encourage the tyrants by a cowardly adulation of their power, by an imprudent exaggerated admiration of their false charities, by abasement in obedience, by licence in liberty, by the credulous welcome of all imposture. Upon whom will you punish the faults of your ignorance and your cupidity?'

"And the confused people remained in a sad silence."
—*Secular Thought.* ROBERT C. ADAMS.

AN OLD MALE FABLE.

I WONDER if we, as a sex, shall have always flung at us that fable of Eve plucking the apple! Yes, as long as the lean-visaged, be-whiskered gentry occupying the pulpit continue to hurl it at us. It is not long since that J. B. Simmons, before the Baptist Publication Society, said: "Beautiful as woman was when God created her, we cannot deny that in morals and religion she was a deplorable failure. From the day she turned her back upon God and God's word (both of which things she did without any influence from Adam) she became a heathen. Heathenism originated in her heart."

I presume Simmons was in the Garden of Eden at the time, and knows just how much influence Adam used! Of course, men have always believed that their sex possesses all that is good and noble, while it is women who are ever vile and depraved. Does not the Bible ask arrogantly: "How can he be clean who is born of woman?" Is not that sufficient for the world of men? How they have hounded us on to the bitter end. How they have flagellated us, scorned us, and bowed our heads in the dust, because of this Biblical statement, and the book's innuendoes concerning our moral lack! Oh, the bitter humiliation that some sensitive women have endured at the stigma! Some of them—not all! There are women among us who are so bound to the Bible, so attached to the Church and its sleek, broadcloth-coated preachers, that if the latter told them that women were made from the ribs or hoofs of the Devil, they would believe it. These women sit in the church and listen with equanimity to the clerical blackguarding of their sex. But you may be sure that something is lacking in their mental department—"rooms to rent," or something of the kind. I never see a bright-faced, quick-witted, brainy woman, with the faculty of penetrating the superficial mass dubbed religion, attending the churches to-day. None of it for them! They know that the Bible was written by men, and they will have none of it. The devout churchwomen of to-day are of the plastic order. They can sit in the pews and hear their sex libelled with impunity. The lineaments of their putty-faced physiognomy never change a particle under the fire. Why? Because they believe that Eve brought sin into the world through the plucking of the apple! They believe that women are depraved and born immoral. The minister has said so, and they believe it; poor creatures with petrified thinking faculties which would disgrace a stone image.

EVA A. CASSELL.

An Irishman bought a cow from a Protestant, and proceeded to pour holy water (as he supposed) on the animal's back, making the cross with due solemnity. Having got a bottle of turpentine by mistake, the more he poured the more the cow kicked. He tried the *holy water* again, when the cow broke loose, kicked him over and dashed away, to the surprise of Paddy and his Bridget, who exclaimed: "Holy Vargin, and mither of Moses! *isn't the Protestant strong in her yet?*"

A lady in the North had asked her son, who was going up to town, to bring back with him a certain motto for the Christmas decoration in the parish church. On arrival at his destination, he found he had lost all recollection as to size and description of motto. Thereupon he telegraphed back, and received the following answer: "For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; 9 ft. long by 2 ft. wide."

Friend—"How are you doing now?" Scribbler—"First rate. Rev. Mr. Saintlie and I have gone into partnership. Making money hand-over-fist." Friend—"Eh? how do you manage?" Scribbler—"I write books, and he denounces them."

ACID DROPS.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH carried his Oaths Bill into law, but many judges are either ignorant of its contents or are bent on gratifying their bigotry at the expense of justice. A case in point has just arisen in the Towcester County Court. Mr. G. T. Smith, a jurymen, claimed to affirm, on the ground that taking an oath was contrary to his religious belief. This was a perfect compliance with the terms of the Oaths Act, and the judge was bound to let Mr. Smith affirm; but, instead of doing so, he impertinently inquired *what* was Mr. Smith's religious belief; and on his declining to answer, as no part of his duty, he was ordered to stand aside, and another jurymen was taken in his place. Judge Snagge may be a very good Christian, but he discredits the seat of justice by usurping illegal powers.

The only way to get this point raised in the Court of Queen's Bench is for some jurymen, who is not allowed to affirm, to inform the judge that he respectfully denies the right of the court to detain him as a spectator, and then to leave the place and see what will happen. If anything *does* happen, we will see that the matter is fought out to the bitter end.

Some time ago "General" Booth expelled a lot of Salvationists at Camberwell for imagining they had any local rights. These castaways have organised themselves as "Free Salvationists," and advertise themselves as "All alive! Growing rapidly!" Yes, yes; that is all very well—in its way; but Booth gets the *cash*, and while he does that he will smile at disaffection.

At the annual meeting of the Nottinghamshire District of the English Church Union, held at Newark, the Rev. W. C. Leeper lamented the small attendance. He thought all Evangelicals should join his Romanising body, for the fight was not going to be between the Church and Dissent, but between Religion and Atheism. He said that even at the Wesleyan Chapel at Nottingham the minister burst into tears because he was overcome at seeing his chapel with only a handful of people, while he had met hundreds going out of Nottingham in brakes and pleasure-vans and on bicycles, intent on pleasure. That Wesleyan minister crying over other people putting their one day of leisure to some use must be a curiosity.

At Patterson, New Jersey, there was a Chinese Sunday-school, with over twenty male scholars, representing the Flowery Land. That school has come to grief. The scholars would have none but female Christian teachers; then the aspirants for heavenly wisdom wanted each a separate teacher. Finally, the head teacher issued an order to her young lady assistants not to take private walks with the Chinamen, lest scandals should arise. Denied these aids to Gospel knowledge, the heathen Chinese doesn't care to know anything further about Jesus Christ.

It was stated before the Bristol Baptist Association that at the village of Hanham two young people were married a little while ago at the Baptist Chapel, and the vicar had been pestering them ever since to marry over again in his church, as their union, he said, was a civil but not a religious one.

At the same meeting the Radstock Baptist man of God said that at Radstock the parish magazine, issued by the rector, bracketed the notice of the burial of a respectable Nonconformist with that of the burial of an illegitimate child as "Buried without the services of the Church."

Sir Gilbert Parker, Governor of Lagos, in a letter to the *Times*, refers to the failure of missionary enterprise in Africa. "It is not surprising," he says, "that the negro fails to comprehend the phenomena of the Trinity; many cultivated Europeans admit the same difficulty." He reminds Bishop Tugwell that the best remedy for the disease is Mohammedanism, which is a teetotal religion, while "Christianity and drink usually go together." "There is a dignity and self-respect about the Mohammedan negro," Sir Gilbert Parker says, "which is looked for in vain in his Christian brother. Compare his neat turban and decent flowing-ropes with the stove-pipe hat and broadcloth of the semi-educated town native, labelled 'Christian' all over; and a very objectionable person this so-called Christian usually is."

The *Westminster Gazette* reads a lesson to that angel of light, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who wants to weed the Liberal party of all but the teetotal section of the Nonconformists. Self-respect, the *Westminster* says, would "shine forth a little more pleasantly if not combined with reckless vilification of others"; and it protests against "foolish and irrelevant personalities" and the "intemperate lan-

guage" of the more pious supporters of temperance. Such writing as this is little short of blasphemy. Only the irreclaimably wicked would find fault, especially in sharp language, with a saint like the editor of the *Methodist Times*.

Our London contemporary, the *Morning*, wants to know how it is that Mr. Price Hughes, who is a vice-president of the National Anti-Gambling League, inserts advertisements in his paper of excursions to the Manchester races. Can it be that the advertisements are for the benefit of tract distributors?

Professor E. Hall has shown the feasibility of the Red Sea miracle—at least to the satisfaction of certain members of the Victoria Institute. He asserts that a gale of wind on Lake Menzahleh was so strong as to sweep away the waters, leaving all sailing vessels resting on the damp bed of the lake. If Professor Hall had seen two millions of people crossing, with the "waters a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," while the waters drowned others by the stretching out of a man's hand, he might have considered the miracle paralleled. But he seems to forget that a miracle explained is no miracle at all.

Dr. Henson, of Chicago, has been denouncing Mrs. Stanton and her Woman's Bible. He says the work is to be "issued at the dictation and under the supervision of a woman who is an avowed disbeliever in it," and declares "her strategic purpose, however, is to reach a class of women who as yet have not lost faith in the Bible, and under the pretence of revision she proposes to turn loose upon the Bible a horde of so-called revisers, who shall root around in it until they have effectually destroyed it." All that is necessary to disgust women with the Bible is to show them exactly what a beastly savage old book it is, and we fear the woman's revision will rather tend to cover this up than to expose it.

Adjectives, etc., from the lips of a lecturer for the Christian Truth Defence Society on Peckham Rye: "Dirty blowflies"—"Rats"—"Fools"—"Thick-headed"—"Starved-gutted"—"Humbugs"—"Dirty hounds." These are all we can condescend to print. The rest must be printed by the Christian Truth Defence Society.

The rector of Clifton, Beds., after having proclaimed the bans of marriage between Mr. Thomas and Miss Alcock, and after the arrangements for marriage had been made, declined to allow the marriage to proceed, on the ground that the lady had not been baptised. A question was asked about the matter in the House of Commons, and Mr. Asquith declared that the action of the rector was without legal warrant. This, however, is not much consolation to the parties insulted. Surely it is time marriage was made a civil ordinance, as in other countries.

The Mariaberg Asylum in Germany, which was under the control of monks, was conducted on truly religious principles. Dr. Capellmann, the head physician, let the brothers tell him what the patients' symptoms were, and then began his treatment founded on what they said, the treatment being fasting, penitential girdles, flagellation, and other means of mortifying the flesh. The Asylum has been temporarily closed.

Kieff is the Russian Mecca, and pilgrims travel there from all parts, because it was there where the warrior, Saint Vladimir, first forced Christian baptism upon his heathen subjects. The peasants make the pilgrimage on foot, and it is astonishing to learn from what great distances these poor devotees come, often suffering incredible hardships on the way, and not unfrequently sinking under fatigue and hunger.

Larks (June 17) devotes a column to "An Atheist's Execution," giving an account of the death of the Chevalier Lefevre de la Barre, who was executed in 1766 for having insulted an image of the Savior. He behaved bravely, even flippantly, at the scene of execution. Voltaire interested himself much on his behalf, and mention of the incident is made in our little book on Voltaire. There is, however, no evidence that la Barre was an Atheist. As he boasted of having read Voltaire, it is rather probable that he was a Deist.

Travelling mediums, who materialise your grandfather, give you a portrait of your dead mother, and slate-writing from George Washington, for one dollar, and travelling evangelists, who convert sinners at fifty cents a head, in our opinion all belong to the same class of frauds and humbugs that every honest person ought to ignore. They are each and all guilty of obtaining money by false pretences. The woods are full of that class of criminals.—*Freethought Magazine*.

We see from *Light* that Mrs. Besant and Colonel Olcott have been visiting the great American test mejum, Mr. John Slater, who is said to be the person who, under the name of Henry Slade, was convicted of fraud on Dr. Ray Lankaster

and Dr. Donkin in 1876. As the mejum's most renowned performances are with slates, his name seems rather appropriate, whether he be Slade or only a spiritual double of that worthy.

The *English Churchman* is much annoyed that at the Liverpool banquet to the Shahzada, "in spite of the presence of the Bishop of Liverpool, grace was said by the leader of the local Mohammedan community." It complains that "nothing has been done to remind the Shahzada that England is a Christian land, and that to her Christianity her greatness is due."

The Shahzada probably knows too much to credit this. He knows that the Christians of India are the most criminal of the population, and that Christianity has left the Abyssinians almost barbarians. He sees here that Christians act right in the teeth of the doctrines they profess.

"The Secret of England's Greatness" is the title of a well-known picture representing the Queen presenting a Bible to an Eastern chief. Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's Secretary, was instructed to write that Her Majesty never made use of any such expression.

Two dead bodies were discovered on Sunday morning at Burley-hill, Allestree, near Derby. "Vermin killer" had been taken by the deceased, one of whom was a young lady named Naylor, the other being the Rev. A. E. Constable, of Guiseley, near Leeds.

George Schrofied Stanford, clerk at Gurney's Bank, Yarmouth, suffered from religious mania. One evening he took his sweetheart for a walk, pushed her into the water, and knelt on her until she was dead. He then drowned himself. Another blessing of religion!

The Rev. Robert Barlow Gardiner cannot stand whistling. A lad named Cassal blew a whistle as he was walking in front of the man of God, who thereupon struck him with a walking stick. The magistrate fined him sixpence, with two shillings costs.

It is a Christian country. The *Echo* (June 24) says: "Within the last two weeks fourteen bodies of murdered infants have been found in London." Let us haste to convert the far-off heathen.

At a meeting of the Universities Mission to Central Africa, held at King's College, the Rev. Horace Waller, a missionary, dwelt on the spirituality of the natives, which was more marked than in European nations. A remarkable instance of this was related by Mr. Waller, when trying once to save the life of a man accused by the witch-doctor of raising a terrific storm. The missionary took the man by the arm, and exhorted him to go to the chief and state he did not cause the storm. When he got to the tent, however, he said, much to the confusion of the missionary, "I did it." The missionary is probably quite right in regarding superstition and spirituality as identical.

Buckle was ridiculed for including earthquakes among the causes of superstition. Yet, since the shocks at Florence, there is hardly a street in which there are not lighted shrines with a view to better protection.

To-Day publishes a sermon by the Rev. T. W. M. Lund, of Liverpool, on the late Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. Mr. Lund says it is the object of Christ's society to fuse mankind and minimise its selfishness. How beautiful! But what is the fact? Why, at this very moment, the Christians are engaged all over the world in stealing land from the "heathen," and snarling at each other, as Mr. Herbert Spencer says, while the theft is being perpetrated. And it is in Christian countries that the race for wealth is carried on with the utmost greed and recklessness.

"Peter Lombard," in the *Church Times*, says that mothers sometimes confound baptism with vaccination, and tells of a young man who did not attend confirmation, although he had been specially prepared for it, because he thought he should have to strip to be examined, and he did not relish the idea.

The Bishop of London thinks that clergymen should not refuse to marry divorced persons if innocent, but only if guilty. His theory seems to be that the innocent party in a divorce is so unmarried that he or she can remarry, while the guilty party is still so married that he or she cannot form a new union.

The Prince of Wales does not like long sermons; nor do the soldiers. The Rev. A. Robins at Windsor is known as the "Soldier's Bishop," and the Prince is said to have told him once, when he promised to attend church, that the

sermon must not last more than five minutes. The soldier's bishop ascended the pulpit, watch in hand, and completed his sermon in exactly three minutes; and the Prince congratulated him on the fact at the luncheon at the barracks after church.

Professor Chamberlain gives the following as a genuine piece of Japanese English, by a native who has visited England: "The Testimony [*i.e.*, Testament] of English said that he that lost the common sense, he never any benefit though he had gained the complete world." The Jap, in secularising the gospel text, has certainly improved it.

A little while ago Austrian farmers were, like our own, praying for rain. Now floods have come in districts where the corn was nearly ripe, and great damage has been done. In some places houses have been swept away and people drowned.

The *English Churchman* is not satisfied with the late Government having hindered the band of the Coldstream Guards from playing at the elevation of the Host at the opening of the Roman Catholic cathedral. It asks that the Act of 10 George IV., c. vii., sec. 26, which prohibits processions with religious emblems, should be put in force against the Catholics. From its description it appears to be equally applicable to the Salvation Army.

The use of incense and vestments in his diocese has been vexing the Bishop of Exeter, who bids his clergy to cease these luxuries—at any rate until the law permits their indulgence.

Ibn Abbas, who some years ago explained in the *North American Review* why he prefers Islam to Christianity, now compares their effects on marriage and divorce from the Moslem standpoint. He says that there are fewer divorces in Cairo with 250,000 inhabitants than in the county of Ashtabula, Ohio, with but 37,000. He says: "Divorce is repulsive to Islam, and every writer of the Moslem faith has condemned it."

Ibn Abbas says: "The polygamy of Islam has come in for a full share of unrighteous indignation on the part of Christian writers. But there is no evidence that Jesus the Nazarene (upon whom be peace) prohibited polygamy." He declares that Moses sanctions, and Jesus never abrogated, what is essentially the Moslem rule.

Ibn Abbas further remarks: "History tells us that Napoleon the Great did, under the sanction of the chief Bishop of the Christian Church, divorce the wife of his youth to suit the ambitious aspirations of his destiny. This has no parallel in Moslem history. The divine laws of Islam, and its judicious licence of polygamy, have rendered such a condition of things unnecessary. It is in this, as in many other instances, that the religion of Islam is better suited to the demands of social and national life. Mr. Synd Ameer Aly, a judge of the Calcutta High Court, has stated that 'ninety-five per cent. of the Mohammedans of India are, either by conviction or necessity, monogamists,' and the late General Macgregor is responsible for the statement that 'only two per cent. of the population of Persia enjoy the questionable luxury of plurality of wives.'"

Parnellism without Parnell does not seem to be a very distinguished article. Its leaders are under a strong temptation, which they cannot resist, of playing to the gallery and damning everything that is British, whether good, bad, or indifferent. The *Independent*, for instance, in rejoicing over the fall of the Liberal Government, exclaims: "Away with them, down with them, especially that charlatan, John Morley—a wretched sneak, a tricky Agnostic," etc., etc. Surely it ill becomes those who cry out against the priest in politics to raise the *odium theologicum* against Mr. Morley. It is enough to damp the enthusiasm of many Freethinkers in this country who have stood up in the darkest hours for justice to Ireland.

Perhaps, after all, the Redmonite organ is not in the least sincere in this denunciation of Mr. Morley as a "tricky Agnostic." It may be only the natural gambol of the professional politician, who is becoming the curse of every democratic country. Talk about Cromwell! Why, to our mind, it would be far better to hand over the reins of power to one man of commanding intellect and character than to suffer the rule of hundreds of little ambitious office-seekers, who make a living by pandering to every prejudice and superstition of their clients.

A new sect of religious worshippers have made their appearance at Zalma, Mo: The Rev. Joseph Shrader is the shepherd of the new flock. The centre of attraction is a young girl, who makes periodical flights to heaven, so it is claimed, returning with messages for the believers. The Rev. Mr. Shrader claims the Bible to be out of date altogether, as

it is not consistent with modern times, and proposes to establish a new code, obtained through the instrumentality of his "angel."

On Long Island, New York, there is a village named Babylon, and a local magnate has made himself ridiculous by issuing an order to the constable to arrest all persons caught riding bicycles through the village on Sunday. The constable says he cannot do it, for the cyclists come in hundreds, and he has no assistance.

A writer in *Blackwood's* says that "priests cannot change their priestly countenance if they wished. For some mysterious reason the subcutaneous tissue over the cheek-bones and under the jaws of the cleric's face gets an undue supply of nourishment, which leaves distinctive marks, while the consciousness of a share in the Apostolic legacy gives a muscular set to the lips."

The French Catholic papers are still harping on "the bankruptcy of science." They cannot possibly mean that systematised knowledge is bankrupt; but good phrases ever were commendable, and this is used to mean the hoped-for bankruptcy of a republic under which science and discussion are free. The reactionaries want to administer the estate—not of science, of which they know nothing, but of the body politic, which they hope to administer. Brunetière was induced at the Vatican, not to rehabilitate the story of creation, or of Joshua causing the sun to stand still, but to help restore the influence of the Church in the State.

God indulges in occasional freaks of monstrosity, even in fishes. A shark, recently washed ashore at Midian, British Columbia, had two distinct tails, three perfect eyes, and what appeared to be the rudiment of a fin or flipper hanging to the under jaw.

The Lancaster *Spy* charges Mr. G. R. Kirlew, of the Strangeways Boys Refuge, with indecent conduct under pretence of religion. Mr. Kirlew pursues the proprietor and editor for libel. They plead justification, and produce witnesses to show the charges are true, and made in the public interest. The case is not yet adjudicated.

His brethren of the Dundee Free Presbytery exonerated the Rev. J. A. Simpson, of Bonnet-hill Church, from the charges of indecency made against him, but affectionately admonished him to be more guarded in his conduct in future.

At Chelmsford Assizes the Rev. R. Temple, rector of Thorpe-morieux, near Ipswich, consented to a verdict against him for £50 and costs for slandering Miss Emily Carpenter, a schoolmistress. On returning from a holiday, she found a rumor circulated in the village that she was a mother of two children. The rumor was traced to the defendant and his wife, the parsonage having an antipathy to the schoolhouse.

Ananias Again!

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has recently turned to beslobbering Bradlaugh! This is atrocious. Let us have his venom in any form but that. Let the donkey kick and bray against Bradlaugh to his heart's content, but let him not praise him. That is loathsome to a degree we cannot describe. The lying Hughes says that Mr. Bradlaugh promised his constituents that "there would be no propagation of Atheism" in Northampton. Well, Mr. Symes was very intimate with Mr. Bradlaugh; he went repeatedly to Northampton to propagate Atheism, almost immediately after Mr. Bradlaugh's first election; and never heard or read till now that Mr. Bradlaugh objected to it, or that he had promised his constituents that such should not be done. The local papers will show that Mr. Symes lectured there twice in the Square to immense crowds, on "Christianity the Worst Foe of Liberty," and "Christianity the Worst Foe of Truth." Out of those lectures sprang a debate with a Mr. Barber, in the Town Hall, extending over four nights, we think. At a later date our editor lectured there again on "Lost! The Christian Heaven." And, on another occasion, he met the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam in debate in the Northampton Town Hall. The local papers will afford information as to dates, etc. The lectures and debates embittered the Christians, but we never knew that they called upon Mr. Bradlaugh to put a stop to them. Had Mr. Symes remained in England, it is extremely probable that he would have visited Northampton on many subsequent occasions. Mr. Hughes evidently finds it congenial to lie. That lying spirit which deceived Ahab's prophets seems now to be monopolised by the rev. gentleman.—*Liberator*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 30, Camberwell Secular Hall, 61 New Church-road : 7.30, "All About Angels."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—June 30, Milton Hall, North London. July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 21 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S. W.

R. S. PENGELLY.—Many thanks. Such cuttings are extremely useful.

W. J. CHIVERS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. MORTON.—Were it not for the power of early association, the Bible would never hold its present place even as literature. Parts of it are sublime, and some passages are pathetic; and the authorised English Version bears the strong stamp of simplicity, having been executed when our language was in its youthful prime. But it is absurd to compare the Bible with Shakespeare. He is more sublime than the Bible at its best; and his intellect, imagination, fancy, wit, and humor have furnished the world with a great rich feast; whereas the Bible supplies only a few simple dishes. How a man appreciates Shakespeare is a fair test of his intelligence; we would even say, a fair test of his character.

DOUBTER.—*Darwin on God*, by G. W. Foote, contains all the important passages on religion in the great scientist's works and in his letters. Read that little volume, and you will see that Darwin was as much an Atheist as the editor of the *Freethinker*. We do not remember that the late Professor Tyndall ever made a direct avowal of Theistic belief. Mr. Herbert Spencer and Professor Huxley are Agnostics; that is, they have no "God"; that is, they are Atheists, as we understand the term.

W. FARMER.—We consider Lotze an immensely overrated thinker. He is lauded by the "advanced" Christians, who wish to obtain a new lease of life for their system, and who naturally cling to any eminent writer who countenances their general supernaturalism. Some day or other we will devote an article to Lotze's views on religion.

O. N. WELD.—Forming a company or a registered society is the only way to acquire property for Freethought purposes until the law allows us to hold property under a trust deed. Shareholders can receive interest if the enterprise succeeds financially; not otherwise. We know the Freethought party is not a wealthy one, and that there are many claims upon its generosity.

A. LIDDLE.—In our next.

G. NAEWIGER.—We believe we noticed your pamphlet when it first appeared. It is not usual to notice the same pamphlet twice.

W. S. R.—Perhaps it is as well to leave the matter as it stands for the present. We certainly think that Freethinkers should, as far as possible, deal with newsgagents who are liberal enough to supply Secular publications.

J. ROBERTS (Liverpool) wishes to ask Mr. George Wise whether it is the rule at his meetings to ask those who offer opposition their names and addresses; or whether, if not the rule, it has sometimes occurred; and, if it has occurred, what was the object of the inquiry?

J. J. R.—"The Lord hath need of them" is an excuse for many shady transactions.

W. H. MORRISH (Killarney).—Your example of distributing *Freethinkers* while on your holidays is a good one, and will, we hope, be followed.

X. Y. Z. and H. MALBONE.—The reference to Numbers xxi. 17, 18, on p. 396, obviously should be Numbers xxxi. 17, 18.

W. J. HOCKSON (Engcobo).—Thanks for paper. We are pleased to see there are Freethinkers in Zembuland.

G. WRIGHT.—Slade was sentenced to three months' imprisonment at Bow-street about the end of October, 1876. About the same time the Rev. Dr. Monck was convicted at Huddersfield. The revelations of the Fox sisters were made in the *New York Herald*, September, 1888.

J. KEAST (Bristol).—We accept Mr. Grinstead's disclaimer, but it is to be regretted that he did not express himself less ambiguously. (Had to hear that the Secular meetings in Eastville Park continue to be successful. Mr. Putnam is roaming the country, and we have not his address. No doubt, if this meets his eye, he will send you his subjects for July 14.)

J. SEDDON.—See paragraphs. We pass by the libel on Colonel Ingersoll. It is bad policy to notice these beastly slanderers unless you can punish them. They have no sense of shame, and they glory in an advertisement.

JAS. NEATE (hon. sec.) reports that the Bethnal Green Branch, which is a poor one in a very poor neighborhood, collected £2 5s. on Hospital Sunday.

J. TOMLINSON.—(1) It does not matter a straw whether Mr. Hughes owns the *Methodist Times* or partly owns it; he is its editor, and responsible for what appears in it. (2) Our extract was correctly taken from *Light*.

JAS. PAYNE.—See "Acid Drops." We fear that nothing will be done to check the contravention of the Oaths Act until one of our men gets into Parliament. Soliciting Christians is no use; you must frighten them to get any justice out of them, at least towards Freethinkers.

J. G. DOBSON.—See paragraph. We hope the rowdism will be checked.

D. F. GLOAK.—Sky-pilot Campbell, of whom you speak, may be a zealous Christian, but he is not overburdened with veracity. It is utterly untrue that the Secularists put the bailiffs into Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh's house. He had no standing at all in the Hall of Science libel case. He asked to be included, but our solicitors treated his letter with silent disdain. You will find all the information in our pamphlet, a copy of which should be purchased and preserved by every Freethinker. Orders for literature should be sent direct to Mr. Forder.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—T. Carne, 15s.; F. Swatts, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Small, 2s. 6d.

W. SCRIVNER.—Received, but too late for notice this week.

A. LEWIS.—Your letter raises an interesting question. It shall appear in our next issue.

H. W.—Thanks; but we cannot use it without the name and date of the paper.

LIVERPOOL.—Of course we treat your letter as "private." See our reply to another correspondent on the same matter.

J. E. STAPLETON.—Thanks for your long (not too long) and interesting letter, with most of which we heartily concur. No doubt the course adopted at the Conference will give substantial satisfaction all round.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cape Mercury—Dundee Courier—Isle of Man Times—Truthseeker—Public Opinion—Liberty—Rangoon Times—Light—Crescent—New York Freeman's Journal—Manchester Courier—Progressive Thinker—Clarion—Justice—Finchley Free Press—Church Reformer—Bristol Mercury—Newark Herald—Northampton Daily Reporter—Essex and Suffolk News—Post—Two Worlds—Freidenker—Twentieth Century—Der Armo Teufel.

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

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.

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

SCALE of ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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.

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.

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

SPECIAL.

THE National Secular Hall Society is still in possession of the Hall of Science, but circumstances, into which I need not enter this week, render it inadvisable to hold our meetings there for the present. I have therefore had another hall engaged, in order not to break the continuity of our propaganda. It is not so large as the Hall of Science, but it is large enough for our summer meetings. The only difficulty is that we cannot charge for admission. We shall, however, make a collection at the entrance—a silver one for the body of the hall, and a copper one for the gallery; and in the special circumstances of the case Secularists will of course give as much as would in other circumstances be exacted.

Milton Hall is known to many Freethinkers already. It is situated in Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road. It is two minutes' walk from the "Mother Red Cap," three minutes' walk from the Camden Town Station of the North London Railway, and five minutes' walk from Camden-road Station of the Midland Railway. Tram cars from Hampstead and Highgate pass the door. Cars from Holloway, Islington, or King's Cross pass Camden Town Station. Persons coming by the underground railway, and getting out at Portland-road or Gower-street, can take a penny ride on the cars running from the corner of Euston-road and the Hampstead-road. Omnibuses run from Camberwell, Victoria, and Westminster direct to Camden Town. Milton Hall is really very accessible, and

we hope it will be crowded this evening (June 30). North London Freethinkers should do their best to fill it to the doors.

Mr. Charles Watts will be the lecturer. His subject is to be "Cromwell and English Freedom," with special reference to *religious* freedom. The following Sunday the lecturer will be Mr. J. P. Gilmour, of Glasgow, and on that occasion I shall take the chair.

The whole subject of our propaganda in London is occupying my attention, and I shall shortly suggest some new developments. G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. FOOTE lectures in the Camberwell Secular Hall this evening (June 30), his subject being, "All About Angels." This lecture will be new to South London Freethinkers.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. He was in excellent form after a recent brief holiday, and his lecture was very warmly applauded; indeed, he received an ovation on resuming his seat. Considering the time of the year and the heat of the weather, there was a capital audience. Mr. Foote, who presided, made an announcement with respect to future meetings, the particulars of which will be found in our "Special."

Mr. S. P. Putnam, our American visitor, lectured three times at Manchester on Sunday, to large and appreciative audiences. "His kindly and genial manner," the Branch secretary writes, "combined with his large store of humorous anecdotes, completely won the hearts of his hearers, and he was greeted time after time with rounds of applause." Several new members joined the Branch during the day.

The Plymouth secretary desires all members to be present next Sunday to make arrangements for Mr. Putnam's visit. The treasurer will be glad to receive quarterly subscriptions, which are now due.

Mr. C. Cohen has been having a lively time in the North. His first two meetings at Stockton were very large and orderly, and fair opposition was offered by a Methodist minister; but the third meeting was riotous, and Mr. Cohen and his friends were severely hustled; indeed, they had to be protected by the police, who guarded Mr. Thwaites's shop, where the little band of Secularists had taken shelter. Fortunately, the general public is much impressed with Mr. Cohen's ability and courtesy. At Middlesboro' there was a similar experience. The first open-air meeting was orderly, but the second had to be given up after Mr. Cohen had spoken for about twenty minutes. He is to visit the district again shortly, when we hope he will meet with a more civilised reception. Freethinkers in the neighborhood who wish to assist in carrying on this propaganda should communicate with Mr. J. G. Dobson, 33 Trent-street, Stockton-on-Tees.

Mr. Cohen held two large and successful meetings on Newcastle Moor last Sunday. A few followers of the man Powell tried to create a disturbance, but their efforts were a failure. Newcastle friends are to have Mr. Putnam with them on July 7, and a tea will be arranged for visitors from outlying places. Those who mean to sit down to that repast should communicate with the Branch secretary, Mr. J. G. Bartram.

Our readers will find on another page a full advertisement of the London Secular Federation's annual excursion on Sunday, July 14, to Clacton-on-Sea. The tickets are now on sale, and we hope they will speedily be bought up. We should like to see the special train well packed; and should there be any surplus, it will go towards Freethought propaganda in London. Messrs. Foote and Watts, as already announced, intend to join this excursion. Other lecturers who may be going will perhaps drop us a line, so that the fact may be mentioned.

"Nunquam" has been found out by a Midland correspondent, who accuses him of irreligion. He says, in reply, that good houses are more blessed than fine churches, and "if to cleave to one's fellow creatures be irreligious, then I am a very infidel. I want to impress upon you that the boundaries of Slow's borough are included in the British Islands, that the British Islands are only two small dots on a big map, that there are several races of people in the

world who do not recognise the Rev. Hopley Porter as their spiritual guide, and that in the mysterious deeps of the great sea of the past are buried nations as powerful, civilisations as perfect, creeds as true, heroisms as noble, and humanities as beautiful and as pathetic as any that the sun now shines on."

Mr. J. P. Gilmour, of Glasgow, who was elected vice-president of the N.S.S. at the Bristol Conference, is coming south for a month's holiday, and on the Sundays he will take the opportunity of lecturing to English audiences, who will find him well worth listening to. He is a deep student, widely read, fluent in speech, and by no means devoid of humor. Mr. Gilmour lectures at Manchester to-day (June 30), and we hope the local "saints" will give him a thoroughly hearty welcome. On the following Sunday he lectures in London, and on this occasion Mr. Foote will take the chair for him, partly out of personal esteem and partly out of compliment to the Scottish Secularists.

The Sheffield friends take an outing next Sunday, July 7, when they will visit the residence of R. S. Wilson, Esq., Tuxford Hall, where they are invited to tea.

There has been a controversy on "The Soul" in the columns of the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, in which J. J. Brown, author of "The Eternal News," has sustained the spiritist standpoint, while "Aristipus," "Aldebaran," and "Lucretius" have written from a sceptical standpoint.

Professor Marshall Hall, a musician of some celebrity in Australia, has composed an overture, "To Giordano Bruno." The idea of the work was suggested by a perusal of the life of the great Freethinker and martyr to superstition and bigotry.

At the Battersea Park Gates on Sunday morning, at 11, Mr. Stanley Jones will debate with Mr. Cyrus Symons on "The Soul and Science." Mr. Symons is a Unitarian, and a very courteous opponent. Freethinkers in the district are asked to support the meeting, as the Branch excursion is on that day.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in the comment upon the Old Testament which she is writing for *The Woman's Bible*, says: "With our ideal of the great first cause, a God of justice, wisdom, and truth, the Jewish Lord, guiding and directing that people in all their devious ways, and sanctioning their petty immoralities, seems strangely out of place, a very contradictory character, unworthy our love and admiration. The ancient Jewish ideal of Jehovah was not an exalted one."

It has been decided to erect in Paris a statue to the memory of Victor Hugo. The situation selected is the square in the centre of the avenue called after the poet, and near the house where he died. The subscription list recently opened for this purpose has already reached a total of many thousand francs.

Reviewing the third volume of "the noble edition of Tom Paine's writings" edited by Mr. M. D. Conway, the *Pall Mall Gazette* admits that Paine was "a remarkable figure," and that he "played a considerable part in the world's affairs," and that he "played it honestly." His influence is allowed to be "enduring," and "to wax rather than to wane."

The writer of "Medical Gossip" in the *Glasgow Baitie* states that the local Secularists, who complain of the inquisitorial treatment of Freethinking patients in hospitals, are raising money to enable them to subscribe for a certain number of beds, to which they will have a right. We shall be happy to hear, in due course, how this enterprise has succeeded.

Mr. Larnar Sugden, a well-known Freethinker, of Leek, has been selected amongst twelve applicants for the post of Surveyor to the Stoke Council and Engineer to the Bucknall Sewage Scheme. His election was unanimous.

The resignation of the Liberal Government and the approaching dissolution of Parliament will put an end to any chance of bringing on either of the Bills for the legal relief of Freethinkers. Mr. Manfield's "Liberty of Bequest" Bill and Mr. Gourley's "Religious Prosecutions Abolition" Bill share a common fate. Perhaps it will make no great difference to the prospects of either of these measures whether the new House of Commons is Liberal or Conservative. Private bills have no assistance from Government; they fail or succeed according to the zeal, vigilance, and influence of their friends.

During the last elections a leaflet, drawn up by the President of the National Secular Society, was extensively circulated, and after reading it a large number of Liberal candidates promised to vote for an alteration in the law as

it affects those who are opposed to the Christian religion. A similar leaflet, brought right up to date, will be prepared for the coming elections. We appeal to Freethinkers all over the country to bring this question to the front at election meetings, and to extract straightforward answers from candidates. Merely to ventilate our grievance at public meetings is in itself a great advantage.

In *Open Court* (June 6) M. D. Conway writes of his visit to Dr. Martineau on his ninetieth birthday, and mentions the progress made by Unitarians and others during that period. He says: "The prosecution of Richard Carlile in 1819 for selling the works of Paine (a more orthodox man than Martineau) was conducted by a Unitarian. This went on till Carlile, and Jane Carlile, and Mrs. Wright, saleswoman in the bookshop, and even the store-boy, were all shut up in gaol for years. So far as I can learn, Mr. Fox, of the Society now known as 'South Place,' was the only Unitarian who denounced these persecutions."

Further on he says: "The vaunted freedom from creeds of Unitarianism has been something like the boasted absence of State religion in the United States—an absence which leaves us fettered by the Sabbath, taxed for an army of explicitly unconstitutional chaplains, and taxed to support all churches because church property is not taxed. Indeed, the absence of an authoritative Unitarian creed seems to have been once felt by many Unitarians as an incentive to secure conformity by tongue-lynching—of course I refer to their narrow wing, now very small: there was always a magnanimous Left, and under Martineau's leadership it has long been the Right."

Dr. Martineau, at the time when Theodore Parker was virtually kicked out and tabooed by the American Unitarians, extended sympathy to him, alluding to some "painful experience" of his own. Perhaps he remembered he had been over-much of a Christian, and far too little of a human brother, to his own sister, Harriet, when she went a little farther in heresy than himself.

Mr. F. H. Balfour, in a lecture given before the Japan Society, said Buddhism was making strides in Japan. "Among the priesthood," he said, "you will find men of the highest families and the deepest erudition, who are not only versed in Eastern and Western metaphysics, but know as much about Christianity as you and I do. Where do you think we shall find one of the completest libraries of Christian evidences in Japan—a library containing all the standard controversial works, from our old friend Archdeacon Paley down to *Lux Mundi*, and the latest volume of the fervent Farrar? In some theological training-school under missionary superintendence? No; but in the great Temple of Reformed Buddhism at Kyoto. All these are healthy signs. The Buddhists are fighting for their faith and for their lives; they do not regard Christianity with indifference, but attack it with honesty and boldness; they are foemen worthy of our steel, and every inroad that is made upon their ranks is a very hard-won victory."

The *Freethought Magazine*, of Chicago, gives, as frontispiece of its June number, portraits of the Rev. J. R. Kaye and Dr. Felix L. Oswald, who are conducting a written debate on the Bible in its columns. Hudor Genone has a feeble reply to "Corvinus" on the reconciliation of religion and science. Dr. Carus also replies to "Corvinus," but only pelts back hard names. Herman Wettstein gives illustrations of the heterodoxy of American divines and Rabbis; Mr. Hale writes on Alfred de Musset as illustrative of the French literature of despair.

November 12 will be the eightieth anniversary of the birth of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who, with Ernestine Rose, her senior by over five years, followed Frances Wright in pioneering the advocacy of Woman's Rights. All these were Freethinkers; and Susan B. Anthony announces that on that date all the women pioneers left in America will assemble at the great Metropolitan Opera House of New York to celebrate the occasion and the fact of Mrs. Stanton having called the first woman's convention together some fifty years ago.

Mary Proctor, daughter of the late R. A. Proctor, is doing something to popularise astronomy in New York. She lectured recently to the working classes at some grammar schools, and expected only a dozen or two, but had attentive audiences of over eight hundred.

Dr. A. J. Gordon has published *How Christ Came to Church*. If successful, it should be followed by *How Christ Got Kicked Out and Run In*.

Public Opinion, of New York, under heading "Religious," gives an extract from the London *Freethinker*. We are getting on.

AWAY WITH PARSONS!

AWAY with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because they falsely claim to know
That God exists, and strive to show
That they're his agents here below!
That's why.

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because they hold a bunch of tracts
That tell of ancient monstrous acts
Of gods and beasts, and say they're facts.
That's why.

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because a man who binds his brain
Within a book can ne'er attain
To moral worth; his life is vain.
That's why.

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because these book-bound weaklings dread
The brains of ev'ry healthy head,
And preach dependence on the dead.
That's why.

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because they fill the infant mind
With thoughts of heav'n and hell, designed
The moral sense to warp and blind.
That's why!

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because with science they are wroth,
And ever try to stop the growth
Of all that conquers mental sloth.
That's why!

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because they've filled the earth with fears,
Dissensions, hopeless hopes, and tears,
Throughout a thousand wasted years.
That's why.
G. L. MACKENZIE.

Christian Virtue.

It has been the custom to label every virtue as Christian that has been evolved as human, ages and ages before our own era, at which time every good thing was re-dated, christened, and re-named, as if it were the result of an historical Christ! Indeed, one expects to hear of the elements of pure air, fresh water, and clear sunlight being christened under this name in the same way that the well-known healing by means of mental medicine, which was practised by the pre-Christian races, has been designated "Christian healing." We shall probably have Christian Lunacy or Christian Idiocy! Yet the fact remains that the direct enemies of the human race in Europe have been the most besotted supporters of the doctrines called Christian. It cannot be too often repeated that the foundations of the Christian faith were laid in falsehood and ignorance. The Fall of Man in the beginning was *not* a fact, and consequently there could be no *curse*. It is but a fable misinterpreted; and the redemption of the New Testament is based upon the fable in the Old. There is *no* virtue nor efficacy in a vicarious atonement, and no priesthood ever had or will have the power to forgive sin, to break the sequence between cause and effect, or to evade the Nemesis of natural law.—*Gerald Massey*.

He (earnestly)—"And now that we are engaged, Ethel, will you pray for me?" She (earnestly also)—"Oh, no, George. I've been praying for you for eight years; but now that I've got you, I'll thank the Lord for you."

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker"
(June 15).

It was a grateful change, after all, to pass from the turmoil of London to the great, quiet, and beautiful country. London is a continual pressure, an everlasting excitement. There seems no end in time or space to its enormous activities. It is difficult to keep still long enough in London to write these "News and Notes." I desire to be on the go, in the swim, all the time. The electric currents possess the universal air, and you cannot escape the sparkling influence unless you take a long journey into the country. One must do this occasionally, I think, in order to recover his equilibrium.

Hence I rejoiced in the loveliness of English scenery as I dashed to Derby on the express, with Watts and Foote in the compartment with me. How delightfully the landscapes spread away from the rushing train; fields and meadows, forests and hills, dotted with villages and handsome dwellings of the rich and lordly, with now and then a towering church or castle, ancient relics of gloom, in the bourgeon of this glorious springtime, adorning the portals of the past, while the music and splendor of the future are bursting forth.

With these mingling feelings of reminiscence and hope, the end of our journey is reached at Derby, a stately village of one hundred thousand people; a village, it seemed to me, after London and in contrast with American cities of like size. An American city would hum from one end to the other, but here the people move along without hurry or tumult; and, honestly, it did seem to me, at first sight, as if I had struck a New England burg of about five thousand population. However, Derby is a handsome place, and the people are good-natured and accommodating.

There were bubbles of excitement, however, circulating through its streets. There was to be a clash of arms in the intellectual arena, and the religious and Freethought spirits were in a state of animated expectancy. The debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. T. W. Lee took place at the Temperance Hall. There were present, I should think, fifteen hundred people at each session. At any rate, the hall was crowded to its utmost capacity. The Christians were on hand to witness the downfall of Infidelity. They composed at least three-fifths of the audience.

Mr. W. J. Piper, editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*, presided on both evenings. He is, I understand, a Unitarian, and he did his duty impartially and admirably, and held the reins of government so firmly that the perturbed theological soul must needs listen according to parliamentary rule—a thing which Mr. Piper said could not have been done ten years ago. Free debate was then impossible. Secularism has been training the people.

Mr. T. W. Lee is a representative of the Christian Evidence Society. He has been a disputant for about fifteen years. He was, at the beginning, I understand, bombastic and egotistical; and I can see some remains of the primeval strata yet. Occasionally, by his manner and the look of his eye, it appeared to my mind that he would like to demolish things by pure physical force, by the "sword of faith," and not by the clash of argument; but evidently he has learned his lesson, and holds his theological team under good control. He does not allow his temper to get the best of him. He is keen, shrewd, and well-equipped. He is a wily opponent. He knows when to dodge, and where to put in his hardest blows. He is a skilled dialectician. He manages his case with the adroitness of a lawyer. He has evidently studied the defences of modern theology. I must confess that I was pleased with his energy, his tenacity, and his determination not to be whipped, no matter how severe might be the blows upon his metaphysical cranium. Even if he was knocked down he wouldn't admit it, and he had a majority of the audience to shout victory while in the jaws of defeat.

Mr. Foote was the man for the occasion. He is imperturbable, no matter how furious the conflict. He does not get excited. He measures his opponent fairly. He knows what he has to do; that the majority of the audience is hostile, and he must handle his subject both carefully and courageously. He has the power both of eloquence and logic. The people are bound to listen to what he says. He constrains by his personal presence. He has physical vitality. He is like a soldier. His speech is persuasive, his method argumentative, with here and there a brilliant illustration or flash of humor. He appeals to the intellect. He is analytic and convincing. He made his hearers see differences where his opponent endeavored to confound them. Not until his closing address did he gather together in one thunderbolt the condensed logic of his incisive reasoning; and then he fairly captured his audience with his splendid peroration, and extorted applause even from the orthodox crowd. Once in a while the enemy showed his teeth and growled, and was just on the point of precipitating a mob; but Foote was in his element then, and quelled his audience

by what they could not help but admire, his display of English grit.

Mr. Lee, in his argument, followed the usual metaphysical lines. He made a statement, not of facts, but of opinions. The question was, "Which is the more reasonable, Theism or Atheism?" Mr. Lee said, in substance: "Something now exists, therefore something has always existed, for something cannot come out of nothing. What is this eternal something? It cannot be the universe as it now is, for that we know has changed. It cannot be the atoms which compose the universe, for they are conditioned and limited. The uncreated substance must be unconditioned and unlimited. Being unconditioned and unlimited, is it intelligent? It is, for the order and symmetry of the created universe declare this. Is it benevolent? It is, for the universe also declares that, on the whole, created existence is for good, and not for evil."

This is the substance of Mr. Lee's argument. It is the old argument from design; an argument which cannot be improved upon with all the artifices of modern theology. Through thick and thin, Mr. Lee stuck to his argument with manful resolve. It was his only salvation.

Mr. Foote did not endeavor to meet Mr. Lee with any metaphysical back-fire whatsoever. He wisely confined himself to facts. He stuck to the scientific method entirely. What are the facts of the universe, and what do these facts mean? In the original statement of the question Mr. Lee put it as follows: "Resolved, That Theism is a more reasonable theory of the universe than Atheism." Mr. Foote declined to admit the words, "theory of the universe," for, said he, Atheism is not a "theory of the universe." It does not profess to explain things. It is simply an acceptance of facts as far as they go. Mr. Foote was right in this. He did not try to elucidate the universe, but simply the facts of human knowledge. These facts, if there is any validity in human knowledge, teach that it is impossible that the universe should be created by an infinitely wise, powerful, and good being. In the first place, we cannot conceive creation, and therefore it cannot be reasonable. But, allowing creation, the creative force, whatever it may be, is responsible for all that exists. It therefore creates the evil, and cannot, therefore, be infinitely good. It cannot be infinitely wise, for everywhere are marks of imperfection. Therefore, whatever the creative force may be, it cannot be God, as defined by Theism. God, so far as we know, is purely the creation of the human mind.

These were the points elaborated by Mr. Foote. He did not once get off his base. He did not try to

Soar away
And mingle with the eternal ray.

He let all speculation alone. He did not build up an airy fabric of Atheism as opposed to an airy fabric of Theism. He did not dogmatise about the unknown. He simply said: "These are the facts; Theism does not fit the facts. No Theistic theory ever invented by man does fit the facts. What is the inevitable conclusion? Atheism, pure and simple. Agnosticism is practically the same thing. It rejects every known theory of Theism. Therefore it is "without God," and that is Atheism. No doubt the Christians saw the force of Mr. Foote's argument. They realised, as never before the logic of Atheism; that, based on facts, it is impregnable, and that the only answer to it is the wail of faith and the gush of sentiment. Mr. Lee knew how to wail and how to gush, and he sought applause by expressing the fervor of his belief. The Christians knew the point, and applauded his assumptions vociferously, while, when he attempted argument, they were dumb. His logical weakness was apparent even to his friends.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

The other Monday morning, as Colonel Blank was walking in his garden, watching an old negro man doing some work which he had hired him to do, the following conversation took place:—

"We had powerful preachin' up at the meetin' last night."

"Ah! what was the sermon about?"

"De maracle, sah."

"What miracle, Sambo?"

"Dat ar maracle, sah, 'bout de loaves and 'de fishes."

"Well, what did the minister say about it?"

"Well, sah, you see old Marse Jesus had been preachin' and doin' a lot of teachin', and the 'postles went round wid him, and one day after dey hab tramp all day with nofn to eat, dey went and got hungry; but dey could find noffin' to eat but two loaves and one or two little tiny bits of fishes, so de blessed savior he kindly blessed dem, and thar was five thousand fishes and five thousand loaves, and de good 'postles dey were oh so 'appy, and dey went and eat 'em all up."

"Why, Sambo, I think you have got that wrong."

"No, indeed, sah, no I ain't. You don't understand. De maracle was, dat de 'postles could eat all de loaves and all de fishes and they didn't bust."

FOLK-LORE AND SPOOKS.

On Tuesday, June 18, I attended, by invitation, the rooms of the Folk-Lore Society, Albemarle-street, W., to hear rival papers on Psychism and Folk-Lore from the ex-president, Mr. Andrew Lang, author of *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, and *Cock-Lane and Common Sense*, etc., and from the present president, Mr. Edward Clodd, author of *The Childhood of Religions, Myth and Dreams, The Story of Creation*, etc. Both are eminent in folk-lore, and Mr. Gomme, author of *Ethnology and Folk-Lore*, presided.

The occasion of the debate was the presidential address of Mr. Clodd, wherein he had said of the Society for Psychical Research: "Analysed under the dry light of anthropology, its psychism is seen to be only the 'other-self' of barbaric spiritual philosophy 'writ large.' It disguises the old animism under such vague and high-sounding phrases as the 'subliminal consciousness,' the 'telepathic energy,' the 'immortality of the psychic principle,' the 'temporary materialisation of supposed spirits,' and so forth. The Society will sell you not only the *Proceedings* containing these precious phrases, but also glass balls of various diameters for crystal gazing, from three shillings upwards." These and some other remarks were not to the mind of the author of *Cock-Lane and Common Sense*, and I fully expected a smart debate. But, although Mr. Lang's paper contained, like his book, a good deal more of Cock-lane than of common sense, in the sense of giving unsupported testimony with no opportunities of cross-examination, he fairly climbed down, declared he said nothing about a spirit world, and only advocated the claims of the Society for Spookical Research as affording much matter for folk-lore study. Their provinces overlapped, the student of folk-lore being engaged in psychical research, and *vice versa*. He encouraged the use of crystal balls, preferring those at four shillings, as a certain percentage of persons saw hallucinations in them. He referred to the distinguished names in the Spookical Society, some of whom, like Mr. Balfour, had science in their blood; and quoted some of the tall stories of Eusepia Palladino's "manifestations," such as boxing Prof. Lodge's ears and pulling his whiskers while supposed to be securely held, and of D. D. Home's levitation. He finally mixed up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego with a passage from Jamblicus, and the report of various savages walking through fire, and introduced a photograph taken by Mr. Thompson, son of the late Archbishop of York, showing the latter. This photo was passed round, and there was certainly nothing very psychic about it. The savage Shadrach & Co.—about as unspiritual a set as could be found—were certainly dancing in steam; but the steam came from a pit, the obvious purpose of which was concealment of how it was done.

Mr. Clodd, in reply, justified his attack on the Spookists by their pseudo-scientific attitude; thus, their authorities for the appearance of apparitions of death were founded on testimony 7 per cent. only of which was British, while 30 per cent. was Brazilian. The truth was they were trying to find proof of spirits, and those who went in that attitude were sure, like the Empress Helena when seeking the true cross, to obtain just what they wanted. He referred to other testimony about "the not immaculate Mr. Home," mentioned that Professor Lodge, though renowned as a physicist, held that psychical problems were best dealt with in a hazy and muzzy state of mind, and declared that the whole proceedings of the Psychical Society were vitiated by their unguarded methods.

Mr. Lang briefly replied, urging that the Psychical Society did collect a mass of folk-lore. Mr. Edward Maitland, author of *The Soul and How it Found Me*, then spoke of having heard in California at midnight a midnight axe, which he took to be the warning of spirits against bears. Mr. Alfred Nutt endeavored to minimise the difference between Mr. Lang and Mr. Clodd. A clerical stranger complained that scientific men did not give attention to spiritual phenomena, and the present writer replied that in the early career of the Royal Society, when belief in witchcraft abounded, it did give attention to such questions, but found it had to square itself against fruitless talk as against plans for protecting the circle or perpetual motion. Spiritism was a survival of a once general theory. Mr. Gomme, the chairman, briefly but concisely summed up the debate.

There was one statement in Mr. Lang's paper I should have liked to have dealt with had there been time. He spoke of the eminent members of the Spookical Society as "not in the slightest degree superstitious." Now, there is no active member of that Society for whom I have more respect than Mr. Lang himself. But assuredly the statement is not true of him. Indeed, I question if it is true of anybody. We inherit superstitions with our blood. Mr. Lang has a strong strain of "special Scotch," and, as he told us, "a diapidated liver." Brilliant, highly cultured, and erudite on some points, he is evidently no judge of the value of testimony. A man of science may be easily bamboozled by a tricky woman, as Mr. Crookes certainly

was by Miss Florence Cook, and probably Professor Lodge by Eusepia Palladino. A man of letters, too, may be duped as easily as a scientist. J. M. W.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

June 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street Branch (lecture held at West Pelton Co-operative Hall at 6.30); 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Special Note.—Through an error Mr. Putnam has July 28 at liberty. Any Branch requiring that date should write to Mr. Watts at once.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

WRONG CHANGES WITH LOCATION.

PALGRAVE, the Arabian traveller, when in Ri'ad, a central kingdom of Arabia, the seat of the Wahabee zealots of Mohammedanism, had an interview with Abd-el-Kereen, a member of the ruling family. He sought for information as to the peculiar teachings of this Wahabee sect. To that end, he asked the aged sheik to tell him the difference between great and little sins, for during their conversation all wrongs seemed resolved into one of these. The reply was prompt:—

"The first of great sins is the giving of divine honors to a creature. The second is drinking the shameful"—that is, smoking tobacco.

"Murder, adultery, and bearing false witness; what are they?" The reply:—

"God is merciful and forgiving; these are little sins."

Had the Mohammedan made similar inquiries of Mr. Palgrave, who was a Catholic Jesuit in disguise, it is probable the first of the great sins would have been the denying that Jesus Christ is less than God Almighty; the second, the denial that the Bible is the word of God; with a third added, rejecting Sunday as a holy day. The lesser sins would be the persecution of infidels and heretics, and lying for the glory of God.

Early education and environment seem to change our notions of right and wrong. The cannibal deems it no crime to roast and eat fat missionaries. We wonder whether the natives of Hawaii do not indulge a regret that their parents had not eaten the fathers of the sons of the missionaries who have lately usurped their government.—*Progressive Thinker.*

PROFANE JOKES.

"What did you learn at Sunday-school, Harry?" said his mother, after his first visit to that institution. "Nothing." "Nothing? What did the teacher talk about?" "Only that they put dandelions in the lion's den, and he wouldn't eat them."

"In the life to come," shouted the evangelist, "there will be no marrying or giving in marriage." Those who were sitting near the Chicago woman heard a low cry of horror as she arose from her seat. "In that event," she remarked to the usher, as she left the church, "I've got no time to be monkeying here."

The story of the Jew who thought God almighty was making too much fuss over his eating a bit of pork, because a storm occurred just then, is equalled by this from Scotland. A Peebleshire man was known to be in the habit of saying his prayers in a field behind a turf-dyke. One day some wags followed him to listen to his devotions, and as he prayed he told what a sinner he had been, and said that if the dyke fell upon him it would be only what he deserved. The wags on the other side could not resist the temptation, but pushed the dyke over him, when, as he scrambled out, he was heard to say: "Hech! it's an awfu' world this; a body canna say a thing in a joke but it's ta'en in real earnest!"

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Cromwell and English Freedom."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 9.15, brake excursion to Riddlesdown. Thursday, at 8, members' quarterly meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "All About Angels."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, O. Cohen, "The Scientific Basis of Morals."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11, debate between Stanley Jones and Cyrus Symons, "The Soul and Science."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "The Plagues of Egypt."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Modern Quacks."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Thursday, at 8, O. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, L. Keen, "What Must I do to Inherit Eternal Life?" (Collection in aid of the Federation.)

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, W. Heaford, "Spiritual Consolations"; 3.15, A. B. Moss, "Antidotes to Superstition."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement." Thursday, at 8.30, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Shall we Live Again?" 3.30, "The Curse of the Cross." Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, G. H. Baker, "Christianity a Plagiarism."

KILBURN (High-road): 7, St. John will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, F. A. Davies, "The Whitewashing of Jesus."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, St. John, "The Curse of Superstition."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, R. Forder, "Theology and Science."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, O. Cohen will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, O. Cohen will lecture; 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, a lecture; 7, S. R. Thompson, "The Origin of the Gods." (Collection on behalf of Sam Standing.) Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Antiquity of Man according to Science."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, J. P. Gilmour, "The Bible and Disease"; 6.30, "The Social Purity Sham."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7, musical evening.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, S. P. Putnam, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 3, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century"; 7, "Christianity and Woman." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, annual meeting, election of officers.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting—urgent.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "The Law of Population."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, W. Treasure, "The Old Testament."

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Grays, Old Pelton): 7, a lecture.

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Hall Nicholson, "The Origin of Man."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 30, m. Victoria Park, a. Regent's Park, e. West Ham.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—June 30, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Creden-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 30, m. Clerkenwell, a. Finsbury Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—July 17, m. Kingsland.

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Tickets will be available from any station between Liverpool-street and Stratford by local train, meeting special at Stratford at 8.50. Returning from Clacton-on-Sea at 8 p.m., calling at Ilford, where passengers can proceed to their respective stations by local service.

Tickets may be obtained from R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.; all Branch Secretaries; and at the lectures on Sundays.

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NATIONAL SECULAR HALL SOCIETY (LIMITED)

has been formed under the Friendly Society's Acts. Of this Society MR. G. W. FOOTE, President of the N.S.S., is Chairman, and every one of the Directors is, and must be, also a member of the N.S.S.

This can only be done by the assistance of the whole Secular Party, who are hereby appealed to earnestly. The shares are £1 each, payable in easy instalments of 2s. 6d. on application, 2s. 6d. on allotment, and 2s. 6d. on each call, of which two months' notice must be given.

FORM OF APPLICATION.

GENTLEMEN,—

Please allot me.....Shares in the "National Secular Hall Society, Limited," on account of which allotment I herewith hand you the sum of.....pounds.....shillings, being a deposit of.....pounds.....shillings per share thereon. And I hereby agree that, if admitted a Shareholder in the above-named Society, I will conform to its rules, and to such of its bye-laws as may be from time to time in force.

Name (in full).....

Postal address

Occupation (if any)

CUT THIS OUT AND FILL IT IN,

and forward (with remittance) to the Secretary—

MISS E. M. VANCE,

28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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