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PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. GLADSTONE'S LETTER TO THE POPE.

CHRISTIAN Reunion has of late years been the theme of much windy eloquence. Every clerical notoriety-hunter has a special recipe for bringing about this desirable consummation. Dr. Lunn, who quarrelled with the Wesleyan Church, tried to give a practical turn to the idea. He organised religious picnics in Switzerland, which were patronised by scores of pleasure-hunting clericals, who took a holiday—often at the expense of their congregations—on the pretence of discussing measures for uniting the household of faith. Churchmen and Nonconformists hobbled together, and indulged in the harmless dream of unanimity. But, alas, all is changed now. The Education Bill has set the dear friends in deadly opposition. They grind their teeth at each other; one set accusing the other of “priestcraft,” and being in turn accused of supporting “godless education.”

There is only one way to secure Christian Reunion. When the lion of Roman Catholicism lies down with the lambs of all the other sects there will be peace; but, as the Yankee said, we rather guess the lambs will be inside.

Lord Halifax, the president of the English Church Union, has long been laboring in this direction. He has paid many visits to Rome, and interviewed the Pope and his cardinals. His primary object is to bring about a reconciliation between the Church of England and the Church of Rome; and the first step on this road is to get the latter Church to pronounce in favor of the validity of Anglican orders.

Jesus Christ gave his apostles the Holy Ghost; they imparted it to others, and those again to others, right down to the present day. Ordination—that is, the gift of the Holy Ghost—comes down by Apostolic Succession. A bad man who gets it is a good priest; a good man who does not get it is no priest at all. Now, the Catholics have held that the Elizabethan bishops, who started the ordination of Church of England priests, had no Holy Ghost to give. It was a sham transaction to gull the mob, and consequently every priest of the Church of England is no better than a layman. Such is the contention of Catholic controversialists, but the Church of Rome has never made any official declaration on the subject. It is therefore still open for a definite pronouncement; and the Pope has submitted the point to the consideration of the Sacred College. Of course, the members of that institution will decide it according to the tip they receive from headquarters. It reminds us of the election of a bishop in the Church of England. The dean and chapter of the cathedral receive a paper from London containing the name of the gentleman who is the nominee of the Crown. They then consult the Holy Ghost about it, and they invariably find that the Holy Ghost and the Crown are in perfect agreement.

While the Sacred College is deciding on the validity of Anglican orders, Mr. Gladstone takes the opportunity to address an open letter to the Pope. It has been transmitted to Cardinal Rampolla, the Pope's Secretary of State, and it reaches the English newspapers through the Archbishop of York. Mr. Gladstone is getting as roundabout as God Almighty in making a revelation.

The Recluse of Hawarden, who pens a long and laudatory letter to the poor Prisoner of the Vatican, has always had a taste for theology. He began with a book on Church and State, which was mercilessly dissected by Macaulay. Every now and then, during his enforced political vacations, he has fired off a pamphlet or an article on his favourite

topic. Many years ago he startled the world with a gratuitous pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees, which was answered arrogantly by Cardinal Manning, and with most subtle eloquence and dignity by Cardinal Newman. Later on he engaged in the superfluous task of defending the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture. Then he crossed swords with Huxley over the Mosaic Cosmogony and the beautiful and edifying miracle of the Gadarean Swine. Subsequently he rushed (in spirit) across the Atlantic, and crossed swords with Colonel Ingersoll over the Christian Religion. His friends removed him from the arena, sadly mauled, and in a bad state of exhaustion; and his opponent has been waiting for him ever since.

No one who has followed Mr. Gladstone's career will be surprised at his open letter to the Pope. Some suspicious fanatics say he is a Jesuit in disguise. But that is all nonsense. Mr. Gladstone has a curious twist in his mind, and a great capacity for demonstrating that God Almighty shares his changes of opinion; but he is incapable of telling deliberate lies. Besides, it is ridiculous, not to say wicked, to fling about accusations for which there is not a shred of actual evidence; and Mr. Gladstone is too old a public servant to have his character damned by a mere conjecture. He has always been a High Churchman, and the High Church has steadily drifted towards Rome. Mr. Gladstone has only shared in a general movement. He coquetted with the Nonconformists as a politician, not as a Christian. They thought they were using *him*, but the pawky old statesman was really using *them*. And they know it now.

Mr. Gladstone admits that the Latin Church, from its “magnitude” and the “close texture of its organisation, overshadows all Western Christendom.” Still, he points out that the clergy of the Anglican Communion number between thirty and forty thousand; and this communion “is extended through the large and fast-increasing range of the English-speaking races.” It is further pointed out that “the great work of restoration,” which has been going on for half a century,

“has brought the Church of England from a state externally of halcyon calm, but inwardly of deep stagnation, to one in which, while buffeted more or less by external storms, subjected to some peculiar and searching forms of trial, and even now by no means exempt from internal dissensions, she sees her clergy transformed (for this is the word which may advisedly be used), her vital energies enlarged and still growing in every direction, and a store of bright hopes accumulated that she may be able to contribute her share, and even possibly no mean share, towards the consummation of the work of the gospel in the world.”

This is a plain hint to the Pope of the largeness of the problem he has to deal with, while there is a broad hint as to the only safe decision in the statement that “the whole subject” of the validity of Anglican orders is to the Church of England “one of settled solidity.” In short, it is for the Pope to take the first practical step towards reconciliation.

Mr. Gladstone urges that Christians have “a common cause.” Ninety-nine out of every hundred of them accept “the central doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation”; that is to say, they believe in an unintelligible mystery and a flat absurdity in physiology. Further, three-fourths of them believe in “the historical transmission of the truth by a visible Church with an ordained constitution,” and the Anglican Church is included in that majority. In the name of this common cause Christians should unite. And there is another common cause which should unite them still

more. "The one controversy," Mr. Gladstone says, "which, according to my deep conviction, overshadows and in the last resort aborbs all others, is the controversy between Faith and Unbelief."

This plain declaration does credit to Mr. Gladstone's sagacity. He knows something of the great controversy between Faith and Unbelief, and he knows with what difficulty the champions of Faith hold their own in a free and open encounter. Differences in the camp of Theology are, after all, but domestic squabbles; the real enemy of every denomination is that Positivism which seeks to give human life a purely secular basis, and which is gradually supplanting supernaturalism in every civilised country. And as Positivism, of which Freethought is the militant aspect, presses onwards to its final triumph, it is inevitable that all who are stubbornly opposed to it, either from social fear or mental inaptitude, will find shelter in the Catholic Church, which is the great historical organ of Christianity. In that Church the spirit of Faith is fully embodied. It makes no concession to Reason; it stands firmly on the principle of Authority; and it speaks with that commanding certitude which is so reassuring to its timid or slothful devotees.

Macaulay, in his essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes*, pointed out that the Protestant schism spent itself during the Reformation. Not a single nation has accepted Protestantism since. The Catholic Church weathered storm after storm, and Macaulay remarked that "she may still exist 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 ruins of St. Paul's." This is a fanciful picture, yet it contains an element of truth. There can be little doubt that the Catholic Church will outlive every Protestant sect, and have ample leisure to compose the epitaphs of all its religious rivals.

Mr. Gladstone's letter is really an important sign of the times. The hatefulness of the word "Popery" is now confined to the Nonconformists and a few Evangelicals in the Church of England. The main body of the Established Church is drifting or sailing straight for Rome.

In these circumstances it behoves Freethinkers to contemplate seriously the probable results of this movement.

When the great Voltaire came to England, in the early part of last century, he found a people who had twenty religions and only one sauce—which was annoying to one who believed that the good things of life were meant to be appreciated. Presently, however, he found a compensation for this deficiency. There were many sauces in France, but only one religion. The Catholic Church reigned supreme, and every now and then it grew ravenous and gorged itself with the flesh and blood of a batch of heretics. But the twenty religions in England kept each other in check, and the result was a very large measure of toleration. English freedom of thought and speech was not due to any inherent love of toleration in the people, but to historical causes, chiefly connected with the state policies of the Tudors and Stuarts.

Now, it is evident that if the Church of England becomes practically absorbed in the Church of Rome (and the two are working amicably together over the new Education Bill) we shall lose one of the principal guarantees for the measure of liberty which we now enjoy. As the Christian forces approach to unity, so in proportion will it grow warmer for Rationalists; and all the more if the wielding of those forces is mainly, if not entirely, decided by the Church of Rome. Those who believe the fine pretences of that Church, where it happens to be weak, are poor credulous fools. It prates of liberty only where it cannot tyrannise. Where it is strong it laughs liberty to scorn. It fought tooth and nail against the Civil Marriages Bill in Hungary; it demands the suppression of Protestant places of worship at Madrid; it procured a sentence of five years' imprisonment, not long ago, on a Barcelona journalist who penned a rather temperate article on the martyrdom of Giordano Bruno; at Malta, which is a British dependency, it compels the civil power to deny the legality of mixed marriages between Protestants and Catholics; and even in Germany, the land of Luther, it has journalists sent to prison for ridiculing the Holy Coat at Trèves. English Freethinkers should ponder these things, and prepare for the great fight with the Catholic Church.

G. W. FOOTE.

OTHER-WORLDLINESS.

"Thy future fate, while thou makest it the chief question, seems to me extremely questionable; I do not think it can be good."—CARLYLE, *Past and Present*, iii. 15.

It is customary to represent Christianity as a system of pure unselfishness. No warrant for this can be found in the Gospels, where future rewards and punishments are everywhere held out as the motives to conduct. Give up your goods here, and you shall have treasures in heaven, is the teaching of Scripture. It appeals to selfishness carried over to another life. When Peter, on behalf of the other disciples, says: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Jesus, instead of reproving their cupidity, answers: "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." The terms offered by the Christian religion make it a good investment, and the only wonder is that Christians fail to follow out the monkish injunctions of the Gospels. Surely it must be because they distrust the security. If they really believed, they would subordinate the interests of this little life to those of eternity.

No one has expressed more strongly than Jesus the necessity of hating the world and everything in it—father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea, and one's own life also—if you would be his disciple (Luke xiv. 26). "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," says the apostle John (1 Ep. ii. 15). In the story of Lazarus, Abraham reminds the rich man that in his lifetime he had his good things, and Lazarus evil things; "but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented"; implying that the next world is fitted with an adjustable compensating balance, sinking the exalted while elevating the lowly.

A fortunate provision of secular common sense prevents Christians from carrying out their principles into practice, or universal monkery would have long since stamped out all true believers. If the postulates of eternal bliss or everlasting blisters were really believed, the concerns of this life would be so dwarfed that society would be turned upside down. We might see the Bishop of London in one garment exhorting the Duke of Westminster to sell all he had to give to the poor; Mr. Justice Hawkins might address Bill Sykes: "Go thy way in peace, William; thy sins are forgiven thee"; and Archbishop Benson might offer his only innocent son, the author of *Dodo*, as a substitute to expiate the crimes of Fowler, Millsom, Seaman, and Dyer on the gallows.

Once admit that conduct is to be regulated by considerations of another life, and its control becomes chaotic, or is placed in the hands of designing impostors. We are told to resist not evil here, that great may be our reward hereafter. What doctrine that was ever taught smacks more of priestcraft than this? And then, to make the matter worse, we are informed that God prefers one repentant sinner to ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Can it be wondered that such other-worldliness is inoperative against crime? Christianity has been called a doctrine for sinners, and its teaching of the atonement of the innocent for the guilty, of forgiveness of sins, and of salvation by a death-bed repentance, fully entitle it to the designation. Such doctrines are premiums on sin, and stand in the way of a recognition of the true law of consequences.

The truth is that other-worldliness, wherever imported, is to the detriment of this-worldism. Calvin would never have had Servetus burnt but that he deemed the sacrifice demanded in the interests of another life. The men who have forwarded this world's progress have been those who have attended to its interests first. Archdeacon Paley, who, though a special pleader, was a clear-headed one, expressly lays it down that Christianity depends upon its systems of rewards and punishment. He says in his *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, book ii., chapter ii.: "As we should not be obliged to obey the laws, or the magistrate, unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, somehow or other, depended upon our obedience; so neither should we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is

light, to practise virtue, or to obey the commands of God." In his next chapter he identifies acts of duty with acts of prudence, saying: "The difference, and the only difference, is this—that in the one case we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present world; in the other case, we consider, also, what we shall gain or lose in the world to come." Religion is thus represented as an extended system of prudence.

While I regard Paley as essentially right as to the character of Christianity, I regard him as totally wrong in regard to the nature of duty. Duty is what we owe to our fellows, not to any imaginary god or after-existence. The Christian doctrine of save your soul alive simply perpetuates selfishness. It is, as Carlyle said, at bottom "but a new phase of Egoism stretched out into the Infinite, not always the heavenlier for its infinitude."

How different is Hindu morality. The central teaching of Christna in the Bhagvat Gita is: "Let the motive be in the deed, and not in the event. Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward." So the hero of the Ramayana says:—

"Virtue is a service man owes *himself*, and, though there were no heaven, nor any God to rule the world, it were not less the binding law of life. It is man's privilege to know the Right, and follow it. Betray and persecute me, Brother Man! Pour out your rage on me, O malignant Devils! Smile, or watch my agony with cold disdain, ye blissful Gods! Earth, Hell, and Heaven, combine your might to crush me; I will still hold fast by this inheritance! My strength is nothing—time can shake and cripple it; my youth is transient—already grief has withered up my days; my heart, alas! it seems well-nigh broken now! Anguish may crush it utterly, and life may fail; but even so, my Soul, that has not tripped, shall triumph; and, dying, give the lie to soulless Destiny, that dares to boast itself Man's Master!"*

The barbarous character of Christianity is exhibited in its system of rewards and punishment. It is the parent without any true idea of education that frightens his children with old Bogey, or promises them that they shall go to the land of sweetstuff. The substitution of false inducements to right conduct impairs the value of true ones. Reliance upon God tends to weaken and destroy self-reliance. To make morality consist in obedience to an irresponsible person, for the exclusive benefit of our own personality in another state of existence, is to destroy it. To inculcate as the motive of right conduct fancies which make this life seem petty and uninteresting, and pamper the morbid appetite for the inscrutable, is to impair the natural stimuli to exertion for the improvement of this world. Other-worldliness is the enemy of true Secular morality.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER XVI.

ETHICAL CERTITUDE.

"You can tell more about a man's character by trading horses with him once than you can by hearing him talk for a year in prayer-meeting."—*American Maxim.*

A FORM of thought which has no certitude can command no intelligent trust. Unless capable of verification, no opinion can claim attention, nor retain attention, if it obtains it.

If a sum in arithmetic be wrong, it can be discovered by a new way of working; if a medical recipe is wrong, the effect is manifest in the health; if a political law is wrong, it is sooner or later apparent in the mischief it produces; if a theorem in navigation is erroneous, delay or disaster warns the mariner of his mistake; if an insane moralist teaches that adherence to truth is wrong, men can try the effects of lying, when distrust and disgrace soon undeceive them. But if a theological belief is wrong, we must die to find it out. Secularism, therefore, is safer. It is best to follow the double lights of reason and experience than the dark lantern of faith. "In all but religion," exclaims a famous preacher,† "men know their true interests and use their own understanding. Nobody takes anything on trust

at market, nor would anybody do so at church if there were but a hundredth part the care for truth which there is for money."

Mr. Rathbone Greg has shown, in a memorable passage, that "the lot of man—not perhaps altogether of the individual, but certainly of the race—is in his own hands, from his being surrounded by *fixed laws*, on knowledge of which, and conformity to which, his well-being depends. The study of these and obedience to them form, therefore, the great aim of public instruction. Men must be taught:—

- "1. The *physical laws* on which *health* depends.
- "2. The *moral laws* on which *happiness* depends.
- "3. The *intellectual laws* on which *knowledge* depends.
- "4. The *social and political laws* on which *national prosperity and advancement* depend.
- "5. The *economic laws* on which *wealth* depends."

Mr. Spurgeon had flashes of secularistic inspiration, as when engaging a servant, who professed to have taken religion, he asked "whether she swept under the mats." It was judging piety by a material test.

There is no trust surer than the conclusions of reason and science. What is incapable of proof is usually decided by desire, and is without the conditions of uniformity or certitude.

Duty consists in doing the right because it is just to others, and because we must set the example of doing right to others, or we have no claim that others shall do right to us. Certitude is best obtained by the employment of material means, because we can better calculate them, and because they are less likely to *evade* us, or *betray* us, than any other means available to us.

Orthodox religions are pale in the face now. They still keep the word of material promise to the ear, and break it to the heart; and a great number of people now know it, and many of the clergy know that they know it. The poor need material aid, and prayer is the way *not* to get it; while science, more provident than faith, has brought the people generous gifts, and inspired them with just expectations. What men need is a guide which stands on a business footing. The Churches administer a system of foreign affairs in a very loose way, quite inconsistent with sound commercial principles. For instance, a firm giving cheques on a bank in some distant country—not to be found in any Gazetteer of ascertained places, nor laid down in any chart, and from which no persons who ever set out in search of it were ever known to return—would do very little business among prudent men. Yet this is precisely the nature of the business engaged in by orthodox firms.

On the other hand, Secularism proposes to transact the business of life on purely mercantile principles. It engages only in that class of transactions the issue of which can be tested by the experience of this life. Its cheques, if I may so speak, are drawn upon duty, good sense, and material effort, and are to be cashed from proceeds arising in our midst—under our own eyes—subject to ordinary commercial tests. Nature is the banker who pays all notes held by those who observe its laws. To use the words of Macbeth, it is here, "on this bank and shoal of time" upon which we are cast, that nature pays its cheques, and not elsewhere; which are honored now, and not in an unknown world, in some unknown time, and in an entirely unknown way. By lack of judgment, or sense, the Secularist may transact bad business; but he gives good security. His surety is experience. His references are to the facts of the present time. He puts all who have dealings with him on their guard. Secularism tells men that they must look out for themselves, think for themselves, act for themselves, within the limits of neither injuring nor harming others. Secularism does not profess to be infallible, but it acts on honest principles. It seeks to put progress on the business footing of good faith.* Adherents who accept the theory of this life for this life dwell in a land of their own—the land of certitude. Science and utilitarian morality are kings in that country, and rule there by right of conquest over error and superstition. In the kingdom of Thought there is no conquest over men, but over foolishness only. Outside the world of science and morality lies the great Debateable Ground of the existence of Deity and a Future State. The Ruler of the Debateable Ground is named Probability, and his two ministers are Curiosity and Speculation. Over that mighty plain, which is as wide as

* *The Iliad of the East*, chap. ix., p. 149, translated by Frederika Macdonald, née Richardson.

† W. J. Fox.

* See *Secularism a Religion which Gives Heaven no Trouble*.

the universe and as old as time, no voice of the gods has ever been heard, and no footsteps of theirs have ever been traced. Philosophers have explored the field with telescopes of a longer range than the eyes of a thousand saints, and have recognised nothing save the silent and distant horizon. Priests have denounced them for not perceiving what was invisible. Sectaries have clamored, and the most ignorant have howled—as the most ignorant always do—that there is something there, because they want to see it. All the while the white mystery is still unpenetrated in this life.

But a future being undisclosed is no proof that there is no future. Those who reason through their desires will believe there is; those who reason through their understanding may yet *hope* that there is. In the meantime, all stand before the portals of the untrodden world in equal unknowingness. If faith can be piety, work is more so. To bring new beauty out of common life—is not that piety? To change blank stupidity into intelligent admiration of any work of nature—is not that piety? If our towns and streets be made to give gladness and cheerfulness to all who live or walk therein—is not that piety? If the prayer of innocence ascend to heaven through a pure atmosphere, instead of through the noisome and polluted air of uncleanness common in the purlieus of towns and of churches, and even cathedrals—is not that piety? Can we, in these days, conceive of religious persons being ignorant and dirty? Yet they abound. If, therefore, we send to heaven clean, intelligent, bright-minded saints—is not that piety? Is it no bad religion—as religions go—to believe in the good God of Knowledge and Cleanliness and Cheerfulness and Beauty, and offer at his altar the daily sacrifice of intelligent sincerity and material service.

We leave to others their own way of faith and worship. We ask only leave to take our own. Carlyle has told us that only two men are to be honored, and no third—the mechanic and the thinker: he who works with honest hand, making the world habitable; and he who works with his brain, making thought artistic and true. "All the rest," he adds with noble scorn, "are chaff, which the wind may blow whither it listeth." The certainty of heaven is for the useful alone. Mere belief is the easiest, the poorest, the shabbiest device by which conscientious men ever attempted to scale the walls of Paradise.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

THE MAKING OF ENGLAND.

PATRIOTISM is a commendable virtue when rationally entertained and judiciously manifested; but where these two qualifications are ignored, love for country is apt to degenerate into egotism and jingo fanaticism. The same principle will apply to religion. No one can reasonably object to individuals accepting those religious teachings which seem to them to be true and useful. When, however, such teachings are claimed as being superior to all others, and at the same time as being the source of the true greatness of a nation, those who urge such claims "protest too much, methinks." The greatness of a country cannot truthfully be ascribed to any one agency, but rather to a combination of factors, which have had a direct bearing upon the mundane requirements of society in general. Theology may satisfy the emotions of its devotees, but it can never enhance the material well-being of a nation. It is worthy of note that, so far as England has achieved greatness, that condition has been reached through acting up to principles which are not to be found in Christian theology. Moreover, it is equally true that, when theological teachings were accepted and acted upon far more than they are to-day, little or no national progress was observed. It is during the nineteenth century—the pre-eminently sceptical period of our history—that the most rapid strides have been made in this country towards greatness. And is it not, at the present time, clerical audacity and theological pretensions that are checking educational advancement? Theologians are monopolising, with their religious squabbles, those opportunities that should be devoted to the consideration of much-needed reforms.

In spite of these facts, we find that the "making of England" is ascribed by a section of the Christian party

to the fact that many of its members had protested against the faith of the Roman Church, and had vindicated the Protestant interpretation of Christianity. The *Methodist Times*, dated May 23, had the following self-satisfied request: "May we not once more stand shoulder to shoulder in opposition to the principles which have degraded Spain, and in defence of the principles which have made England?" This is truly a fine specimen of Protestant conceit, and of the kind of love which one Christian Church exhibits towards another. The members of both Churches profess to be followers of the same Jesus, and to be influenced by the same "spirit of Christ"; and yet, if they had the power, they would extirpate each other. Christ is reported to have said: "Ye shall know them by their fruits"; "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit" (Matthew vii. 16-18). If these words be true, the nature of some Christians is anything but enviable, and the Christian tree must be corrupt indeed. To-day, as in former times, these followers of "a meek and lowly Jesus" are not content only with persecuting Freethinkers and depriving them of their legal rights, but they also seek to injure members of their own faith. Well might Jesus exclaim: "I came not to send peace, but a sword" and "A man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew x. 34-36).

But what are the principles referred to by the *Methodist Times*? Why, of course, those of Christianity, as interpreted by the Roman and the Protestant Churches. Those principles have dominated the intellect and feelings of the inhabitants of Spain, and it is admitted that the degradation of their country has been the result; but it is alleged that the same principles, when expounded by Protestants in this country, have tended to the "making of England." Such is the position held to-day by one branch of the Christian Church, which is called "the party of Protestantism." To the Rationalistic mind, the cause of the different influences of the principles in the two countries appears to be this. In Spain they were, as far as possible, consistently carried out, while in England they have, to a large extent, been modified and qualified by the partial rule of reason. That is, Roman Catholics endeavored to practise the genuine article, and lamentable consequences followed; but Protestants, not adhering strictly to the faith, and putting a more lax interpretation upon its meaning, deprived it of some of its most injurious tendencies. Let us, however, see if the Protestant view of Christianity is calculated to assist in the "making of England."

This Methodistic proposal appears to have been called forth by the fact that the Irish members of Parliament voted for the second reading of the Education Bill, upon the grounds that they were in favor of religion being taught in our public schools. Now, however much we, as Freethinkers, may regret their action, it is only fair to acknowledge that, in the course they took, they acted consistently as thorough-going believers in Christianity. They profess to be firm adherents of Bible teachings, which say: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy" (Col. ii. 8); "Knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor. viii. 1); "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge it hath perverted thee" (Isaiah xlvi. 10); "Bodily exercise profiteth little" (1 Timothy iv. 8); "Be not righteous overmuch" (Ecc. vii. 16); "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Ecc. i. 18); "We are fools for Christ's sake" (1 Cor. iv. 10); "Be ye therefore wise as serpents" (Matthew x. 16); "If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (1 Cor. xiv. 38). Even Christ did not organise any educational institution, and Christendom remained for more than a thousand years without the general masses having an opportunity of acquiring any practical secular knowledge.

The "making of England" requires something more than Protestant protest against the errors of Rome. The advancement that has been made in this and in other countries is due to the activity of the intellect in fields of investigation where theology was not to be found. If social progress had been the result of Protestant opposition to the Roman Catholic religion, that progress would have been visible at least two centuries ago; and if the zeal for religion had been a civilising agency, Spain would, ere this, have furnished a grand example of a progressive nation. But neither Church Protestantism *per se* in England, nor Roman Catholicism in Spain, had the elevating effects which are claimed for both forms of the Christian religion. In our own country the social con-

dition of the people was most deplorable until the middle of the present century; and it is a very significant fact that the principal efforts which have been made to improve that condition met with the determined opposition of the clergy of the Church of England. The same non-progressive spirit was manifested in Spain; for, while other nations occasionally declared war on behalf of the Christian faith, the Spaniards aimed for many generations to extort the confession from other religionists that their faiths were heretical. They not only sought to protect their country, but they made desperate efforts to propagate Christianity and to extirpate all heresies, whether they were "Atheistic," Jewish, or Gentile. They heartily supported their king, who held that it was better not to reign at all than to reign over heretics.

It should be obvious to the impartial observer that the Nonconformists' cry about the domination by the clericals, of which we are now hearing so much, is only an expression of jealousy at the recent success of the clerical party. Most of the Nonconformists would be, if they had the power, as despotic in their methods as are their religious rivals. The present conflict between the Church party and the Dissenters is simply a fight as to which shall be master of the political situation. It is a family quarrel, and, whichever side wins, little or nothing will be gained towards the promotion of the moral and intellectual status of the nation. Bearing in mind the inconsistent conduct of the majority of Nonconformists in reference to secular education in our public schools, we are inclined to say to both sections of the Protestant Churches: "A plague o' both your houses."

It must not be supposed that we desire in any way to defend the Roman Catholic Church. We should be much concerned if we thought it probable that Catholicism would ever again darken the history of our country. To us it would also be extremely regrettable if there were grounds for believing that the Protestant Church would hold absolute sway. Our contention here is that Christianity, as taught in the New Testament, and as interpreted by both Churches, has not made England what it is. Those who doubt the accuracy of our conclusion need only remember that the principal precepts ascribed to Christ are not acted upon, and that when either Church had undisputed power civilisation was an unknown quantity. This is one of the clearest facts recorded in the annals of history.

We allege that the causes which have impelled men towards liberty and general improvement, that have secured for them political and social advancement, have been independent of all theology. As Buckle points out in his *History of Civilisation*, the changes in our way of life are dependent on three things: (1) The amount of knowledge possessed by our ablest men; (2) on the direction it takes, and the sort of subjects to which it refers; (3) on the extent to which it is diffused among all classes in society. These are the permanent causes of the world's progress, which, as Buckle says, "contain those eternal truths which survive the shock of empires, outlive the struggles of rival creeds, and witness the decay of successive religions."

CHARLES WATTS.

SHAM CHRISTIANS.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe.....If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."—JESUS CHRIST.

REGARD not the words, but behavior,
Of those that profess Christianity,
And ask for the "signs" which their "Savior"
Has promised as proofs to humanity.

He says, if a Christian takes whisky—
No matter the quantum and quality—
'Twill ne'er make him dizzy nor frisky,
Nor hurt in the least his vitality.

The person whom "drink" could make frisky—
Though taking as much as you please of it—
Is not a believer, for whisky
Is harmless to Christians—ev'n seas of it.

Drink's "deadly" that makes us excited;
It "hurts" us, unless we are muddle-proof;
But parsons—those "sepulchres whited"—
Say Christ says that Christians are fuddle-proof.

The test is so simple and handy
That *genuine* Christians would go for it,
And prove, by their pow'r over brandy,
They'd faith, and had something to show for it.

The Christian who thinks it too risky
To trust to his Savior's veracity
Has faith that is weaker than whisky,
And "cheek" that's as strong as mendacity.

Believers, be truthful and candid!
You know you would question the sanity
Of those who would do as the "Man" did
Whom *you* call the Guide of Humanity!

Now, Christians! do try to be honest,
Nor longer coquet with morality!
To claim to possess what is *non est*
Is "parlously" near to rascality!

Your faith is a sham, and you know it—
Unless you are minus mentality.
Admit it! be honest, and shew it
By aiming at higher morality!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

SPAIN is the classic land of persecution. Christianity has slain myriads of heretics there, and would do so again if it had the opportunity. It is not surprising, therefore, that some Spanish Anarchists have taken a leaf out of a very bad book; although it is surprising that the Christians, who have murdered so many of their opponents, should look so intensely horrified when a few of their own number are served with the same sauce. For our part, however, we deplore and denounce the throwing of a bomb into a religious procession at Barcelona on Sunday last. Six persons were killed and fifty injured, and probably not one of them had committed any crime beyond being stupid. Such acts of violence are as foolish as they are wicked. They only throw society into the arms of reaction. Let us trust to reason and persuasion. These are our only legitimate weapons, and it is only with these that we can win.

In the year 1858 the officers of the Inquisition dragged from his home, in a respectable Jewish family at Bologna, a child seven years of age, under the plea that he had been secretly baptised by a servant girl, and so belonged to the Church. Edgar Mortara was never given up, although his abduction was noised all over Europe, exciting the greatest indignation in Liberal circles. The priests at Rome even added insult to injury. They told Edgar Mortara's parents that they could easily regain their child by becoming Christians.

Once more the world hears of Edgar Mortara. He has just been appointed by the Pope as Superior of the Hospital of St. Bernard. What a tribute to the power of education! What a proof that nearly every man's religion is determined by the accident of his training!

Pastor Thomas Spurgeon, who fills the place of the great Spurgeon at the Tabernacle, is in some respects a true chip of the old block. In a sermon on Wednesday evening, May 27, on behalf of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, he related the following story: "Beware lest God take you at your word, lest he damn you when you pray him to do so. A week ago I heard of a terrible instance of how God takes us at our word. A poor girl, very proud and haughty, had been taken to a place of worship. In her anger and excitement, she said it was a shame that she was taken there, and that she would never enter such doors again. She never did, because God struck her dead the next day."

Thomas Spurgeon "heard" this story. What splendid evidence! We also have "heard" it—from Thomas Spurgeon, and we don't believe it. Evangelical sermons abound in such concoctions.

What a God, to strike a poor girl dead for not liking a church or chapel! Would any Secular lecturer kill a poor girl for not liking his discourse, or the place in which it was delivered? Any brutality seems justified by religion.

The Free Churches, as they facetiously call themselves, have held a special Conference at the Memorial Hall, London, on the Educational Bill. Dr. Clifford called it "that damnable Bill," which is as near swearing as a minister can get—in public. So hot was the meeting that

Mr. Gladstone's name was actually hissed. Dr. Rogers pitched into the "priests"—that is, the ministers of the Church of England, just as though every minister of every denomination were not a priest to the full extent of his opportunities. Of course a strong resolution was carried against the Bill as "involving grievous injustice to Nonconformists and other large classes of the population." It was not stated who these other classes of the population were. Dr. Clifford, Dr. Rogers, and Mr. Price Hughes are surely not trying to speak for Secularists, Agnostics, Atheists, and all sorts of Freethinkers. To do that would be the height of impertinence.

Dr. Parker did not move his amendment at the Nonconformist Conference on the Educational Bill in London. He seconded the regulation resolution in the interest of harmony. Nevertheless, he expounded his principles, and the *Methodist Times* admits that "he had a strong minority in sympathy with him among the audience." Were the other leaders as sound as he is on the matter, it would probably be easy to draw the whole Nonconformist body in favor of Secular Education in the public schools.

The Nonconformist conscience, not recovered from the desertion of the Irish on the Education Bill and the shock of Mr. Gladstone's letter on the validity of Anglican orders, had a fresh blow in learning that the Prince of Wales, after spending Sunday steam-launching on the Thames, won the Derby. To enter "Persimmon" for a horse race might, perhaps, have been overlooked, but to actually win and call everybody's attention to it is a theme for much prayer and many sermons. The Nonconformist conscience is a very elastic article, and its friends need not despair of its recovery from these successive shocks.

Wales has a Roman Catholic bishop, and his name is Mostyn. This sky-pilot has a mitre, of which the following description is taken from the *Westminster Gazette*:—"Of white-embroidered silk, richly ornamented with gold, it is studded with 500 precious stones. The mitre, which is Gothic in design, bears on its front a dove, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, in gold *repoussé* work, encircled by garnets; and a heart formed of a single carbuncle of large size, with jewelled rays. The whole is surmounted by a cross, composed of thirty-three gems. On the back are the figures of the Welsh patronal saints (St. David and St. Winefride), beautifully wrought in the Welsh colours, and surrounded by rubies, emeralds, and pearls. At the apex appears the national emblem—the Welsh harp—encircled by topazes and aquamarines, which is an exact copy of the ancient 'Ariandlwys,' which tradition declares to have remained in the possession of the Mostyn family from early centuries."

Fancy a grown-up man holding such a plaything! But is a priest a man? There are three sexes—men, women, and clergymen; and the priest belongs to the last category. That is, he belongs to it in character. Physically speaking, he is so little a female that, in spite of his vow, he "scatters his maker's image through the land."

Of all the humbugs in the world Theosophists are about the biggest. Advanced people generally are in favor of cremation, of course on rational grounds; and the Theosophists want to appear advanced, only they don't want to assign a rational ground for anything. Countess Wachtmeister states as a Theosophical reason in favor of cremation that, "until the gross material body had disintegrated, the astral form hovered about the place of interment in the shape of a bluish mist." Madame Blavatsky was cremated, otherwise her grave would have been haunted with a large supply of bluish mist, for the gross material body of this spiritually-minded lady must have weighed some twenty stone.

The Church never objected to burning people alive, and condemning them to eternal fire after death; but it strongly objects to cremation. The Pope has told all who have their bodies burnt here that their souls will be burnt hereafter, and the bishops of the Province of York refuse to adapt the burial service to the needs of the crematorium. The secret is that the Church is bound in its creeds to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and the palpable consumption of the body by fire would make the absurdity of that article of the creed palpable to the commonest intelligence.

The vast catacombs of Rome remain to prove that the early Christian practice was burial, in opposition to the Pagan sanitary custom of cremation. But the catacombs also show that Jews, and the followers of Mithras and Sabazius, who probably taught the doctrine of the resurrection in their mysteries, also used burial, which was originally derived from Egypt.

The American General Assembly has been meeting at Saratoga. Six years ago at the same place a committee was appointed to revise the Westminster Confession of

Faith. Meantime heresy has spread. Dr. Briggs openly teaches the errancy of the Bible, and, although the majority of Presbyterians cling to the infallibility of the Jew books, the minority who accept "the new criticism" as a proof of their fallibility and human authorship is a growing one. Dr. Briggs has been suspended from the ministry, but he remains the foremost instructor in a theological college whence are derived recruits for the Presbyterian ministry. The *New York Sun* says: "So far, the advantage is wholly with the unbelievers."

At the afternoon sitting of the Southport Evangelical Conference a paper on Sunday Observance, by the Rev. J. H. Townsend, D.P., of Tunbridge Wells, produced a prolonged howl. The sky-pilots see with alarm that their monopoly of the day of leisure is encroached upon on every hand. The opener exhorted the Conference to "take up an attitude of undying hostility to Sunday desecration." Those who followed spoke against Sunday cycling and Sunday golf, and the State was appealed to "to enforce the public observance of the Lord's Day." As the tide of public opinion recedes from them, the ministers of the Gospel are ever more ready to appeal to the law.

In connection with this subject several ministers at the Conference expressed the opinion that the "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Movement was spoiling the other services and lowering the tone of religion."

The inconsistency of the Sabbatarians is seen in nearly every item of their superstition. They refuse Sunday papers produced by week-day labor, and have their Monday papers produced by Sunday labor. They refuse, in some places, to receive Sunday letters, and entail double labor on the postmen. Under pretence of concern for the Sabbath rest of attendants, they got the British Museum open on week-day evenings, when it was not required, thereby entailing over twenty hours' labor per week instead of a quarter of that time on Sunday.

Here is an advertisement which appeared the other day in the *Morning Post*:—"Would some pneumatically-minded lover of Church work give curate's wife cushion-tyred lady's bicycle?—For details apply —, Strand W.C." It is a pity that the beggar is a wife. Had she been unmarried, there might have been an affinity between that "pneumatically-minded lover of Church work" and the "cushion-tyred lady," which would have been productive of happy matrimony. This style of advertisement will probably be popular, and one of these days we will hear of a "bald-headed lover of truth" inviting some "soft-felt hearted" person to send him a three-and-ninepenny hat; or a "philabeg-sick victim of the Celtic renaissance" mentioning that he would thank a man with a "Galashiels tweed conscience" to forward a pair of breeks.—*Glasgow Weekly Herald*.

The *Free Church of Scotland Monthly* says:—"Some ministers seem to make special efforts to avoid all forms of direct prayer, and indulge in rambling reflections, introspections, and disquisitions on Providence and mankind in general, giving the Lord minute information on the moral state of the world, and suggestions as to the methods He shall employ to put things in proper order." But what is "direct prayer" but an assertion that the minister knows better than the Almighty?

The Rev. Jacob Primmer, of Dumfermline, claims that "it is one of the jolliest things imaginable to be a minister in these days." No other profession is so well paid for doing so little.

Mr. Birrell's lecture on John Wesley has inspired a curious article in the *Methodist Times*. Wesley was certainly a great man, though he was far from possessing a great intellect. But the organ of Mr. Price Hughes lauds him most extravagantly. It calls his *Journal* the key to the eighteenth century, and declares that "It was the magnificent vigor and tremendous force of Wesley that saved England from a revolution as sanguinary and disastrous as that which desolated, and still desolates, France." If this means anything at all, which is rather doubtful, it means that Wesley, by his religious revival, staved off the political and social changes that were necessary in England, and gave at least fifty years' longer life to the oppression and plunder of the people by the upper classes. Is that a thing for which posterity should be grateful?

The French Revolution was the opening of a new epoch in the history of modern Europe. All the changes that have taken place since, and which are called by the general name of "progress," have sprung from the ideas and sentiments let loose upon the Western world in that great upheaval—not from the Christianity of shallow and pretentious Nonconformists.

"England," the *Methodist Times* says, "was as much

influenced by Wesley as France was influenced by Voltaire. In the life and work of these two men we have a key to the divergent histories of the two countries." We venture to doubt the first statement. Wesley's influence in England was not as wide as Voltaire's in France. Voltaire touched the life of his time at almost all points; Wesley's efforts were far less comprehensive. As to the "divergent histories" of the two countries, a Voltairean Frenchman would naturally differ from a Wesleyan Englishman, and it does not at all follow that the latter is right. The average Frenchman is quite as moral—to say the least of it—as the average Englishman; he is probably happier, and perhaps a trifle more intelligent.

Dr. Momerie says that the doctrine of salvation by faith is "the most vile doctrine with which the world was ever cursed." Considering the number and extent of religious dogmas of all kinds, this is pretty strong language.

Why doesn't the working man go to church? is a question still troubling the sky-pilots. A working man seeks to throw some light thereon by saying that, in his experience, when you are invited the tune is "Come to Jesus," but if you fail to shell out it is "Go to the Devil."

Francis Earles, a Clissold-park constable, drowned himself in Duckett's Canal, Bow. In a letter to his wife he said: "Thank God, I am sober." The jury found he was insane, so he hadn't much to thank God for, after all.

W. R. Bradlaugh boasts of having converted "two prominent infidels" in the Deptford district, one of them of thirty years' standing. Any story of this kind is swallowed by Christian credulity. W. R. Bradlaugh is invited to give the names and addresses of his two converts.

On Derby Day the *Daily News* came out with the following story of the ruling spirit strong in death:—"Just before the Epsom Summer Meeting of 1891, Sir Charles Bunbury's training-groom, one Cox, fell ill, and, as it was expected that he would not recover, a clergyman was sent for to administer religious consolation. When he arrived poor Cox was speechless; but he had evidently something on his mind, for he tried again and again to address his visitor. At last he succeeded. With a terrible effort he rose up in his bed, and, with the 'dews of death upon his forehead, said: 'Depend upon it, sir, Eleanor is a fine mare.' Cox then fell back and died comfortably."

The Castletownroche Roman Catholic Church has been burned to the ground shortly after divine service was performed. The great wonder-worker of the Bible loses all his chances of putting in a miracle now-a-days.

The ravages of the rinderpest in South Africa are said to have been worse than any cattle plague which has affected the region within living memory. The Christian King Khama, who was over here recently, has lost from his private herds alone 8,000 head of cattle. It is likely that within a few weeks not a single cow will be left in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. It is estimated that, at a low valuation, the cost of the plague will prove to be over five millions sterling. To the South African native cattle are at one and the same time savings bank, medium of exchange, and staple diet.

The cholera in Egypt is another blessing from above. In Cairo, since last September, 3,030 cases have occurred, of which 2,523 resulted fatally.

It appears from the *New York World* that the damage by the cyclone at St. Louis was still more disastrous than at first reported. One thousand five hundred persons are estimated to have been killed, and far more injured; while thousands were rendered homeless. The surrounding districts have also felt the scourge, and small townships add their quota to the amount of lives lost and property destroyed.

A Southern Methodist paper exults over the fact that one "Schrader, the divine healer," has been driven out of Nashville by the police for practising medicine without a licence. Does the Methodist paper understand that Jesus Christ carried a diploma in his pocket? The fact seems to be that Schrader did not practise medicine in a manner contrary to law; he did not administer drugs, nor charge a fee. Like his Galilean predecessor, he laid hands upon the sick, and they recovered, or imagined that they did, and, like Christ, he received their free-will offerings. And, yet again like Christ, he had to depart out of the country. The Methodist paper says that "Schrader and his like serve one useful purpose: they gauge the depths of public stupidity." Perhaps so; but is it any stupider to patronise one of "his like" who is living than to worship one of them who is dead?—*Truthseeker*.

The success of these American faith-healers, Messiahs, and other cranks, affords a good object-lesson, enabling us to understand how in yet more distant places and unenlightened times human credulity could exaggerate the wonder-working powers of a healer, and elevate an itinerant preacher into a God.

The ex-monk Widdows, who on May 1, 1888, was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude for an abominable crime, is again minister of a congregation at Hackney, and goes about the country pretending to expose Roman Catholicism, which he doubtless finds a paying game. *Truth* asks: "What sort of religionists must they be who accept the ministrations of a man of this stamp?"

A Great Yarmouth correspondent of the *Church Times* is alarmed at the twenty-seventh clause of the Education Bill, since he discovers that it will give Agnostics, Secularists, and Freethinkers the same right to have their religious principles taught in elementary schools, as well as those of any other class of parents; and he declares that to provide legal facilities for such persons to enter schools would be a miscreant thing to do. No doubt he is unnecessarily alarmed; but it is evident the clause is distasteful to a considerable number of Churchmen.

The Rev. W. W. Hazen, of Marshalltown, Iowa, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for swindling his neighbors.

After attending a revival for several evenings, Fred Bergerson, of Portland, Oregon, became insane on the subject of religion, and was locked up as a lunatic. Religion is like rum—you must not take too much of it.

A revival with pyrotechnic accessories is going on in Gallipolis, Ohio. The Rev. Syndicate Wilson is conducting it, and every time a sinner comes to Jesus a sky-rocket is let off as an intimation to the angels that another mansion is required. The merchants of the town have increased their stock of fireworks in view of Wilson's threat to convert everybody in the place.

The veracious Exodus vii. 16-25 describes how "Moses stretched out his rod, and all the waters in Egypt were turned into blood." The *Fireside* finds a corroboration or an explanation of this in the blood-red appearance of the Nile at certain times, owing to the presence of infusoria and minute cryptogamous plants of a red color. But this work of explaining Bible miracles is like showing how a conjurer's tricks are done.

A writer in *Public Opinion* points out that the numerical letters in the name of the Czar Alexandrovitch count up to exactly 666, the number of the beast referred to in Revelation xiii. 17. Perhaps Prophet Baxter will note this and make it the occasion of new prophecies, his finding the mysterious number in Louis Napoleon and E. Boulanger having turned out such ridiculous failures.

According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, a petition from the Jewish community that their synagogue in Moscow, which was compulsorily closed three years ago and the entrances barricaded, might be re-opened was curtly refused with the intimation that, if any further petitions on the same subject were sent, the authors of them would be punished. Such is toleration under the most Christian Czar.

The income of the Additional Curates' Society has considerably fallen off, and the Low Church *English Churchman* is not sorry, since a large portion of its funds goes, and has gone for many years, to Ritualism more or less extreme.

According to the *Catholic Weekly Register*, some English nuns prayed, "not to Our Lady or to the Saints, but to Cardinal Manning himself." Their prayer was answered, and, now miracles are being wrought in his name, there may be a movement for the canonisation of the late Cardinal, despite the proofs of his dissimulation which the Devil's advocate might adduce from the pages of his chosen biographer, Mr. Purcell.

Despite its forward movement, Unitarianism is not increasing. The report by the Rev. R. Spears at the last Conference was that, while in 1888 there were 378 churches in this country, there were at present only 354. Mr. Spears, who is of the old school, attributed the decline of Unitarianism to its whittling away the value of the Bible. We attribute it to its love of respectability and lack of independence.

According to statistics from Christian sources, the world contains 493,000,000 of Christians, against 1,006,000,000 non-Christians. The figures are given in order to stimulate missionary zeal. They reckon every inhabitant of a "Chris-

tian" country as a Christian, while the difficulty is to find a single one who answers the description.

The late Bishop Thorold, of Winchester, whose biography has just been published, claims to have induced Matthew Arnold to drop his illustration of the Trinity as three Lord Shaftesbury's. This is what the Bishop says in his diary:—"April 17, 1883.—I saw Matthew Arnold at the club. He asked me to read his paper on Isaiah. I asked him, if he had a chance, to leave out in his *S. Paul and Protestantism* that illustration of God by Lord Shaftesbury. He took it so nicely, thanked me, and said Lord Derby had once advised him 'never answer, never apologise.' On May 29 'he told me that he is leaving out that objectionable passage in a new edition.'"

This is very pretty, but we doubt its accuracy. The Bishop is clearly wrong, demonstrably wrong, on one point. The illustration of the three Lord Shaftesbury's does not occur in Arnold's book on St. Paul, but in the larger volume entitled *Literature and Dogma*. Then, again, something had happened to prepare Arnold for the change suggested by the Bishop. Mr. Foote, during his second trial for Blasphemy in April, 1883, had read out in court several strong passages from living writers—passages which Lord Coleridge said he had often difficulty in discriminating from the "blasphemy" for which Mr. Foote was indicted. One of those passages was the Lord Shaftesbury illustration in *Literature and Dogma*. Soon afterwards Arnold brought out a People's Edition of that book at half-a-crown, in which the passage was omitted. It was Mr. Foote, therefore, rather than Bishop Thorold, who was the real cause of this alteration.

Mr. Booth-Tucker, successor of Ballington Booth, came to this country [United States] with the prestige of having saved countless souls in India. In England he reported that he had left behind in the Indian field 10,000 genuine converts and 75,000 adherents of the Salvation Army; but this claim is being strongly controverted by a Mr. Gillespie, an Irish missionary in the part of India where Booth-Tucker labored. Gillespie says that if the commissioner can produce 100 real converts won by the Army in twelve years, he will subscribe a rupee a head for the whole lot.—*Springfield Republican*.

It may be hoped that the Salvationists of both camps will be permitted to a certain extent to drop out of the newspapers and go about their business. If they can do any good anywhere, every right-minded person will wish them Godspeed; but their vulgar notoriety, and self-seeking, and bickerings, and jealousies, and family suspicions, and absurd exaggerations, and mutual accusations of falsehood and of mean motives, have done their cause an amount of harm which years of the most devoted and unselfish effort can hardly undo.—*New York Tribune*.

Irene A. Stafford writes in the *Open Court* in favor of greater openness of social intercourse between men and women than exists even in America. She says: "One of the difficult things to understand in connection with the story of Adam and Eve is, how they fell so suddenly into that state of blushing self-consciousness which made them run and hide themselves in the garden. But if a whole line of ancestors had been instilling into each preceding Adam and Eve ideas of self-concealment and artificiality, it would not seem so strange that they wanted that fig-leaf panoply to fling over themselves. When Christian fathers could pronounce woman in her relations to man 'a natural temptation,' 'a domestic peril,' 'a deadly fascination,' and 'a painted ill,' it is not strange that the conception of any primeval sweetness or innocency of intercourse between man and woman should have been lost. But a new need is making itself felt—the need of a better understanding of one another on the part of men and women, and, by consequence, a better, happier intercourse."

Madame Juliette Adam tells a funny tale of a friend to illustrate the ignorance of some French juries: "Being impanelled upon a jury, and being aware, owing to circumstances which he could not reveal, of the entire innocence of the prisoner whose fate he and his colleagues were called upon to decide, he strove in vain to persuade them to bring in a verdict of 'not guilty,' but despaired of ever doing so. Luckily the prisoner's name was Mary. Struck by a sudden inspiration, he exclaimed: 'A descendant of the Virgin Mary cannot be guilty. Come, what do you say?' All voted for an acquittal!"

The New Woman is going it with a vengeance. Robina Barton has applied to the Marine Board at Melbourne for a second mate's certificate. Fancy a woman treading the deck and ordering about the crew. How her petticoats would flutter in a gale of wind! But perhaps she would wear bloomers or knickers. Seriously, it doesn't seem a workable arrangement. When women become sailors, there

appears to be only once thing left for them to achieve. They should then demand to be fathers of families.

Bishop Barry was one of the speakers at the recent annual meeting of the Anti-Vivisectionist Society. Naturally there was plenty of religion in his address, and frequent references to Mr. Benjamin Kidd's book, as though it were a work of wonderful originality. Bishop Barry was very discreet in referring to old ecclesiastical cruelties, most of which he fathered on the Inquisition, which was a Roman Catholic institution. His lordship conveniently forgot the cruelties practised by the Protestants, who burnt Roman Catholics, and even heretics within their own pale. Branding, burning, ear-chopping, and nose-slitting were common cruelties on the part of the Church of England. And how the Non-conformists, in New England and elsewhere, tormented and murdered inoffensive Quakers is written red in the history of the seventeenth century.

It seems impossible to keep religious cant out of these movements. So many people enter them, not as citizens, but as Christians, and talk as though theirs were the universal religion of this planet. How they would cry out if Freethinkers were to talk "shop" in the same fashion!

Piety has fallen on evil days. There is a man, or something in the shape of a man, called Isadore Dondormer, at Elizabeth, New Jersey, who thinks he is the son of God, and spends much time in holding imaginary conversations with his father. His wife, however, has her own view of the matter, and has obtained a judge's order committing her husband to Morris Plains asylum. Isadore Dondormer is two thousand years too late. The poor fellow forgets that the situation he aspires to is already occupied.

At a meeting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Dr. Scott, the Moderator, gave a long address, in which he stated his views on scepticism. "When, yielding to the impulses of their lower nature, men cast off the restraints of religion," he said, "they will always be ready to palliate their action by ingenious scepticism." We are much obliged to Dr. Scott for this explanation. It enables us to understand the Glasgow Bank directors, who ruined thousands and built churches with part of the plunder. It also enables us to understand Jabez Balfour, and the other heroes of the Liberator Society. Yes, it is sun-clear now.

Dr. Scott thinks that scepticism is occasionally honest, but then "it more frequently indicates weakness than strength." Yes, that's it. The late Charles Bradlaugh was an honest sceptic. All the clergy say so now he is dead. This explains his notorious weakness. Dr. Scott is a Daniel come to judgment; yea, we say, a Daniel.

Brother Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, has a knack of knocking down the stilts on which many vaunted heroes are placed. Thus he describes the Christian idol as "running around through the fields of Palestine getting dog-fennel between his toes." Dog-fennel and blue grass are among the noted products of Kentucky, the State from which Brother Moore hails.

Those who fancy that there is perfect equality between negroes and white people in Christian America will be surprised to learn that the Supreme Court, the highest legal authority in the States, has affirmed the law of Louisiana compelling every railroad in the State to provide separate cars for white and colored passengers.

The *New York Sun* (May 19) recalls the story of a parson who, at the time of the Civil War, called on Andrew Johnson, the vice-president, and proposed that he should get down on his knees and pray with him that the Union cause might triumph. They prayed and prayed, and when both became very much worked up Andrew Johnson jumped to his feet and exclaimed: "Damn it, parson, after the prayers you have offered and the consoling words you have uttered, I am of the opinion that we will knock hell out of the damned rebels, and ultimately preserve this great and glorious Union. Let us have a drink."

The Virgin Mary is said to have died at Mount Sion, and the body was laid in a sepulchre in the Garden of Gethsemane. A few days afterwards the Apostles rolled away the stone, probably to interview the corpse, and lo it was gone. Her ladyship's body had been translated to heaven. At the time of her decease she was on a visit to the Holy Land. For some time previously she had been living at Ephesus. The house she resided in was quite unknown till recently. It is now settled to the satisfaction of the Vatican, and a cathedral will probably be built on the spot. Such are the barefaced arts of imposture by which the Catholic Church trades on the credulity of its devotees. Pilgrimages to the imaginary spot where the imaginary Mother of God once resided will be another source of revenue to the priesthood.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 14, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "Thomas Hardy's Novels, and Why the Bishop of Wakefield Burns Them."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 14, Northampton; 21 and 28, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. W. TRENAMAN.—Many thanks for the American cuttings. Are you a relative of Captain Trenaman, who was such a sturdy supporter of Charles Bradlaugh many years ago at Plymouth?

W. FRANCIS.—If you want to study Comte's teaching, we advise you to begin with *A General View of Positivism*, translated by Dr. Bridges; then read the *Catechism of Positive Religion*, translated by Dr. Congreve. Afterwards, if you have time, and access to the books, read Harriet Martineau's admirable summary of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, now published in Bohn's Library, and the *Positive Polity*, in four volumes, translated by Congreve, Bridges, and Harrison. The last work is expensive.

JOSEPH SEDDON.—We hope the Manchester friends will have a good time at the picnic.

SARAH A. THOMPSON, Ashton-on-Mersey, writes that her husband—one of the newly-elected vice-presidents of the N.S.S.—is suffering from eye trouble. The doctor orders him complete rest from reading and lecturing. Local Branches will please note. We earnestly hope that Mr. Thompson will speedily be restored to health, and that he will husband his energies more carefully in the future.

A. J. MARRIOT.—It is not to be expected that any two men can agree in all points. It is enough if you were "delighted" with Mr. Foote's lecture on the whole. Mr. Foote's view of Parnell has been stated before. When you call him selfish, you appear to forget that the £40,000 presented to him was all spent on the Irish movement. Surely, too, you exaggerate when you call Julius Cæsar "a wretch." Modern historical criticism has shown that the real wretches (if the word must be used) were the mob of greedy aristocrats who assassinated him.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges a parcel of useful clothing from Mrs. Mann. Further gifts will be received with much gratitude from gentlemen friends.

BRANCH secretaries and others who have up to the present omitted to return or account for the gallery tickets issued at the Children's Party are requested to forward them to Miss Vance immediately. The balance-sheet cannot be completed until this has been done.

J. WATTS, treasurer of the Bristol Branch N.S.S., writes that he is to be prosecuted for addressing an open-air meeting on behalf of the Socialist Society at Bath. The police, he says, took him to the station, for the purpose of obtaining his name and address. Mr. Watts does not give us sufficient details on which to form a judgment; his letter, indeed, is rather enigmatic. Speaking in the open-air is not a crime under English law; the prosecution must be for obstruction or provoking a breach of the peace. We advise Mr. Watts to be very sure of his ground before engaging in a conflict with the police.

E. H.—Mr. Watts and Dr. Jamieson have not yet debated the subject of the appendix you refer to. We do not think any of the other debates you mention are now in print, but Mr. Forder may be able to supply you with copies nevertheless. Apply to him direct, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

E. G. TAYLOR.—We have not seen your article yet. The *Westminster* is not sent to us by the publishers. Dr. Parker's first letter to the *Times* appeared during the London School Board elections in November, 1894; we do not recollect the precise date. His second letter appeared nearly three weeks ago. You will have little difficulty in hunting them out, if the *Times* file is kept in the Manchester Free Library.

D. FORMAN.—The Old-street Hall is still advertised to let for business purposes. It appears, therefore, that the Salvation Army paragraph, which was circulated through the whole press of this country, was substantially a falsehood. What the Booths said was that they had taken the hall; what they meant was that they would like to take it. On the strength of the one, represented as the other, they asked for at least £1,000. Probably there was a poor response to the appeal. Of course it is idle to ask the newspapers to publish a contradiction. The Booth fable is being circulated in America. The *Boston Evening Record* says that Bradlaugh's hall has been "transferred to the Salvation Army," and that "organised Atheists do not now own a single hall in London." This is false; they own two. The Hall of Science was never owned by the Freethought party in Bradlaugh's time. They only used it, paying rent like other occupants.

W. WRIGHT (Newcastle-on-Tyne) says he attended the opening of a Presbyterian church in that city on June 3, and one of the speakers—the Rev. J. B. Meharry, of Crouch Hill, London—boasted that a member of his Bible Class, who had earned a medal for punctual attendance for three years, was the son of a Secularist lecturer in Finsbury Park. We are asked to say whether this is true. Our answer is, We don't know. Let the reverend gentleman give the boy's name; then we will make inquiries.

HARRY DINES.—The *Sunday Companion* is easily taken in. If that article did appear in the *Journal des Débats*, which is a sceptical organ, the writer must have been poking fun at the orthodox believers. The sailor swallowed by the whale belonged to a British ship, the "Star of the East." That explains why the story comes from Paris. It is quite idle to discuss a fiction. People who believe that a nameless English sailor spent thirty-six hours in a whale's intestines last year are past praying for. Christianity, when it catches on, is a great softener of the brain.

J. M. R.—Thanks for cuttings.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—George Anderson, £10; Hematite, 2s.; H. Dines, 1s.

R. KILLICK.—Much pleased to hear from you. See paragraph.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

E. T.—Received with thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New York Sun—Kokstad Advertiser—Post—De Dageraad—Philadelphia Inquirer—Progressive Thinker—Evening Item—Twentieth Century—Federalist—New York Public Opinion—Echo—Isle of Man Times—Liberty—Torch of Anarchy—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Humanity—Fur Unsere Jugend—Vegetarian Messenger—Homœopathic World—Daylight—New York World—Dominion Review—Banner of Light.

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.

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

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.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had another good audience at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, when he lectured on Mr. Gladstone's Letter to the Pope. On the chairman's invitation of questions or discussion, a white-haired gentleman rose and spoke for several minutes. After referring to his experience in the House of Commons during the Bradlaugh troubles, and to the "inscrutable" character of Mr. Gladstone, he went on to deal with Cardinal Vaughan, who, he said, was always ready to make capital for his Church out of every public incident. Finally, the speaker said he had heard a great deal about Mr. Foote, but had never heard him lecture before. On the whole he was delighted with the lecture, which was one of great eloquence; every sentence being properly constructed and in its proper place in the paragraph, and every paragraph being in its proper place in the discourse. He hoped the great Church of Humanity would beat the Roman Catholic Church in the immediate future. On resuming his seat, this gentleman handed up his name, and there was much cheering when it was announced that he was Mr. J. Passmore Edwards, the proprietor of the London *Echo*, who has given so many princely gifts to the people, chiefly in the shape of Free Libraries.

Dr. Walsham How, Bishop of Wakefield, writes to the *Yorkshire Post*, June 9:—"Will you allow me publicly to thank you for your outspoken leader in your to-day's issue denouncing the intolerable grossness and hateful sneering at all that one most reveres in such writers as Thomas Hardy? On the authority of one of those reviews which you justly condemn for their reticence I bought a copy of one of Mr. Hardy's novels, but was so disgusted with its insolence and indecency that I threw it into the fire. It is a disgrace to our great public libraries to admit such garbage, clever though it may be, to their shelves."

This will form a capital subject for Mr. Foote's lecture at the Athenæum Hall this evening (June 14). His subject is worded—"Thomas Hardy's Novels, and Why the Bishop of Wakefield Burns Them."

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at the Athenæum Hall on the following two Sundays. Persons who complain that they cannot find the hall are again reminded that it is No. 73 Tottenham Court-road, on the west side, nearly opposite Store-street.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Manchester. The morning audience was an average one, but a heavy downpour of rain interfered with the afternoon

meeting. In the evening there was, of course, a good gathering. Each lecture was enthusiastically received. In the evening Mr. Taylor, as chairman, spoke very highly of the success of the late Conference of the N.S.S. at Glasgow.

To-day, Sunday, June 14, Mr. Watts lectures, afternoon and evening, at Northampton, under Mr. Foote's scheme. We hope friends will muster in force from the surrounding districts.

The Annual Excursion has now been definitely fixed for Sunday, July 19, to Margate and Ramsgate by special train. Tickets, 4s.; children under fourteen, 2s. Our generous friend, Mr. S. Munns, of the Terrace Hotel, Margate, will provide a good tea at 9d. per head. Messrs. Foote, Watts, and others, will be present. Some have requested that Broadstairs might be included in the excursion, and this has been done; but special tickets are issued for this, although the fares are identical. Tickets can now be obtained from all Branch Secretaries, and from Mr. Forder or Miss Vance, at 28, Stonecutter-street, E.C. Particulars of the time of train from the various stations will be duly announced, the time of departure being later than upon the last occasion, in order to meet the convenience of friends living in the East and North of London.

The annual procession of the scholars and friends of the Failsworth Secular Sunday School took place on Whit-Friday, May 29. About 260 people walked in the procession, and, after parading the township, headed by the Sowerby Bridge Friendly Brass Band, they returned to the school, where the scholars were supplied with oranges, buns, coffee, etc. After a short rest all adjourned to a field lent by Mr. Barlow, where games, dancing, and sports were indulged in, returning to the school at five o'clock, where a party was held.

Public Opinion, a high-class New York paper, sometimes gives an extract from the *Freethinker*. The last number to hand reprints the passage on "Blasphemy" from one of Mr. Foote's articles on *The Sign of the Cross*.

The *Zoophilist* for June contains some interesting reports of the progress of the anti-vivisection movement. The supplement gives a full report of the annual meeting of the Anti-Vivisection Society, at which an excellent speech was delivered by Lord Coleridge.

The forty-sixth annual report of the London Homœopathic Hospital is sent to us. We read, with pleasure, that the children's ward of the new building is so pleasant that the children don't like to go home again, and that the lady visitors take violins and guitars to play to the patients. It is a reflection on the wisdom of the wealthy that, while millions are wasted on foreign missions, all our London hospitals are in want of funds.

The June number of *De Dageraad* (Daybreak), the Dutch organ of Freethought, now in its seventeenth year, is an exceptionally good one. The first article is by Dr. B. J. Smidt, on "Spinoza and his Circle," reviewing the new book, *Spinoza en zien Kring*, by K. O. Meinsma, just published by Martinus Nijhoff, at the Hague. Herr Meinsma has given much attention to the history of Freethought in Holland, and his work, which we hope to see, is doubtless an important accession to the increasing volume of Spinoza literature. H. J. Uijldert writes on "Atheism against Agnosticism," Dr. Ten Bokkel writes with erudition on "Immortality in the Old Testament," A. H. Gerard reviews Tolstoj's recent utterances on "Christianity and Patriotism," and W. L. Pullenberg has a slashing article on the iniquities perpetrated "To the Greater Glory of God"; and there is an editorial on the progress of Darwinism, entitled "*Magna est Veritas et Prevalabit*."

The Manchester Branch has its Annual Picnic to Chester to-day (June 14). Members and friends will please assemble at the station at 9 a.m., and purchase their tickets from the Committee, who will be in attendance.

A few friends at Liverpool have signified their intention of joining a "Reading Circle," under the guidance of Mr. L. Small, B.Sc., the Branch secretary. Messrs. Foote and Wheeler's *Crimes of Christianity* will be taken as the first Text-book, each member to be apportioned reading work for the purpose of explaining fully to the class the contents of the works of authorities therein referred to. The circle will meet in the Oddfellows' Hall at eleven on the first Sunday of each month, commencing July 5.

The Humanitarian League's Fifth Annual Report shows increased activity on the part of this praiseworthy organisation, without any part of the subscriptions having been spent on salaries.

There are Freethinking members of the N.S.S. at East

Grinqualand, South Africa, and we read in the *Kokstad Advertiser* that one of them, Mr. Horton, refused to take the oath as a jurymen, on the ground of having no religious belief, and was at once permitted to affirm.

The *Staffordshire Sentinel* publishes correspondence on the Education Bill, in which good letters appear on the Secular side of the controversy. Freethinkers should everywhere try to ventilate their views and grievances in the local newspapers.

DEAD MATTER!

THE case of orthodoxy, whether we begin at one end or the other, needs but to be stated in plain words to be refuted. Not willing to ascribe any inherent power to what is known and familiar to everybody, Theists credulously credit some totally unknown substance with all possible power, and assign to it the task of imparting to matter all its attributes and its qualities. It is impossible, say they, that "blind," "dead" matter should move itself, and assume all the beautiful and wonderful forms which we see. The world could not have made itself; there are to be seen in it beauty, splendour, intelligence; these could not have originated in mere matter; they must have been bestowed by a being who himself possesses them. All this is specious, but hollow; prime faith, but not logic.

Is matter so "dead" and so "blind" a thing as they represent it to be? Do not divines discredit matter to enhance the greatness of their fictitious deity? Those who divest their minds of prejudice find in matter food for ceaseless wonder; and it is quite gratuitous to tell us that matter cannot think, feel, etc. How do you know? Matter has shown such marvellous properties, single and combined, that he must be reckless who will venture to say that he knows all its attributes. The facts of nature—the glowing of suns, the ceaseless revolutions of planets, the endless currents in the air and the sea, the ever-changing face of the sky, the resurrection in spring, the marvels of vegetable and animal life—all proclaim the power of matter, and rebuke the ignorance of those who call it "blind" and "dead." What! a thing that is in eternal flux, ever changing into shapes and motions more enchanting than all romances—this thing "dead" and "blind"! Because its *mode* of life is different from yours, dare you say that it does not live at all? Because it sees not, as you do, through lenses, does it, therefore, not see at all? In sooth, you are fine judges of such profound mysteries!

We see the magnet attract steel; we see chemical action day by day; we observe the mutual attraction of the earth and the bodies near its surface. This experience is our sole reason for supposing that the magnet and the earth do attract, that elements possess chemical cohesion. In organised bodies, on the other hand, we see all the phenomena of what we are pleased to call "life," and in the higher ones of intelligence. Why ascribe magnetism to that piece of soft iron, if you will not ascribe life to the tree or to the man? Magnetism is an essential attribute of the magnet; life is such of the man. Why suppose there is a living being who bestows the life, unless you also assume a magnetic being to bestow the magnetism? Really orthodox talk on this subject is mere trifling. These people say that a being cannot bestow an attribute which itself does not possess. Very well; if that be so, their God must be a curiosity.

Let us suppose that they are correct. Then their God must have had, in his own person, all the qualities now possessed by all matter—weight, size, color, shape, taste, odor, extension; he must be solid, liquid, and gaseous, freezing, boiling, burning. He must be magnetic and non-magnetic, gravitating, attracting, repelling. He must be both resting and moving, living and dead, blind and seeing, intelligent and foolish, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, rough and smooth, etc. These are but a few of the qualities which we observe around us. They must be native or imported, belonging essentially to matter, or else imparted by some other substance which possessed them all before. The Deist may charge me with trifling and flippancy; but I am merely stating his own doctrines, and trying as best I can to show their real absurdity.

J. SYMES.

THE COLONEL WILLING TO MEET HIM.

THE following unique challenge received by the *World* was shown to Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll :—

"I, the undersigned, challenge Robert G. Ingersoll in a joint debate before three judges and two timekeepers, ten minutes each, in points on his (Ingersoll's) Bible lecture, in any hall in New York, or any large city, but New York preferred. The one gaining the most points must receive 65 per cent. of the net receipts after paying expenses.

"The judges to be chosen by the *New York World*.

"THOMAS KENYON.

"400 Westminster (Room 4), Providence, R.I."

Colonel Ingersoll pondered gravely over the communication, and appeared to be considerably perplexed.

"On reading and re-reading this note," he said, at length, "I am not quite sure whether the gentleman means a verbal debate (in which I could not hope to cope with him), a contest with small gloves, or both.

"If he is challenging me to a glove contest, there are certain conditions on which I feel bound to insist. I claim the right to choose the referee, and if I have the choice it would be for a gentleman who, I am told, has frequently officiated in that capacity, and who, I understand, is known to the sporting fraternity under the affectionate cognomen of 'Honest' John Kelly.

"I am content to leave the selection of timekeepers to the sporting editor of the *World*, in whose judgment I have implicit confidence.

"Mr. Kenyon's proposed contract is, however, rather loosely drawn up. He does not specify the amount of the purse, nor does he say whether the contest shall be a fixed number of rounds, or whether we shall fight to a finish. He does not fix the weight at which we shall enter the ring, or say whether we meet under Queensberry or London prize ring rules. He fails also to furnish any guarantee against police interference.

"I must insist on Queensberry rules; that the whole purse shall go to the winner; that 50 per cent of the gate receipts be allowed to the loser for training expenses.

"If the fight cannot be successfully brought off on American soil, I shall be glad to meet him in Mexico, or under the auspices of the National Sporting Club of London. Only on these conditions will I consent to meet Mr. Kenyon."

—*New York World*.

Evolution and Time.

The great length of time required for the production of species by the evolutionary process is supposed by Lord Salisbury to furnish a reason for disbelief. In support of his argument he cites Lord Kelvin's conclusion, that life cannot have existed on the earth more than a hundred million years. Suppressing criticism, let us accept in full the hundred million years, and see what comes of it. Lord Salisbury invites us to reflect on "the prodigious change" required to transform his hypothetical jelly-fish into a man. He appears never to have reflected upon "the prodigious change" which in a few months transforms the human ovum into an infant.

The nine months of human gestation, more exactly stated, is 280 days—that is, 6,720 hours, or 403,200 minutes. Thus, then, the total change from the nucleated cell constituting the human ovum to the developed structure of the infant just born is divisible into 403,200 changes, each occupying a minute. No one of these changes is appreciable by the naked eye, or even by a micrometer. Turn now to the other member of the comparison. To compare the two sets of changes, we divide 100,000,000 years by 403,200. What is the result? We get nearly 250 years as the interval available for an amount of change equal to that which the fetus undergoes in a minute. Another way of presenting the facts yields results still more striking. We may fitly, contemplating the whole series, take a year as the equivalent for a generation. If so, it follows that, to achieve the transformation of the *Protozoon* into man, it requires only that in the space of 250 generations the change shall be as great as that which the human fetus undergoes in a minute; or, otherwise stating the fact, it requires that each generation shall differ from the last by as much as the fetus differs from itself after an interval of a fourth of a second.—*Herbert Spencer*.

RAMSEY-KEMP TESTIMONIAL FUND.—J. Umpleby, 10s. 6d.; J. Dobson, 2s.; J. Hayes, 2s.; Charles Smith, 1s.; H. B., 2s. 6d.; A. Lewis, 2s.. Per W. H. Spivey (Huddersfield): William Priestly, 1s.; Thomas Stead, 1s.; Samuel Phillips, 1s.; Thomas Whiteley, 1s.; T. Lodge, 1s.; T. O. lenshaw, 1s.; J. Whiteley, 1s.; E. Moorhouse, 1s.; W. H. Spivey, 1s. Per A. Tripp (Brighton): G. J. Holyoake, 5s.; Alfred Gill, 2s. 6d.; G. Halls, 2s.; F. Harmer, 1s.; J. H. Early, 1s.; H. Hickmore, 1s.; Mr. Stevens, 1s.; Mr. Butt, 1s.; Mr. Plumbly, 1s.—G. WARD, *Hon. Treasurer*.

THE ZEITGEIST.*

THE Zeitgeist strides upon his way, oblivious to fears,
Down Fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches
through the years.

Beside this turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through
the years
Lived Charles Erastus Gontoseed with numerous compeers.

And Charles Erastus Gontoseed with terror stood aghast,
The Zeitgeist travelled at a gait so reckless and so fast.

So Charles Erastus Gontoseed stood in his onward track
To wrestle with the Zeitgeist and persuade him to hold back.

But Zeitgeist saw not Gontoseed, his look was far away,
But left behind his trampled form mixed with the miry clay.

And then the Zeitgeist still strode on, oblivious to fears,
Down Fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches
through the years.

Beside this turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through
the years
Lived William Henry Schlamahead with numerous compeers.

And his impulsive temperament chafed in a restive woe,
The Zeitgeist travelled at a gait so lumberly and slow.

So William Henry Schlamahead, the boldest of his race,
Stole in behind the Zeitgeist to accelerate his pace.

Stole in behind the Zeitgeist to accelerate his flight,
And lunged against the Zeitgeist's back and pushed with all
his might.

The Zeitgeist travelled on his way, wrapped in eternal peace,
And no one saw his rate of speed perceptibly increase.

But Schlamahead he pushed so hard his nervous system
broke,
And he lay stretched a victim to an apoplectic stroke.

And then the Zeitgeist still strode on, oblivious to fears,
Down Fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches
through the years.

And down this turnpike thoroughfare the sons of thunder
throng;
The Zeitgeist hears their strife of tongues, and still he strides
along.

"Turn to the right," a loud one cries, "and quickly bend
about,
For just ahead there stretch afar the bridgeless Bogs of
Doubt."

But boldly through the bogs he strides; the mists that wrap
the place
Are melted at the coming of the smile upon his face.

"Turn to the left," the voices shout, "the Moonshine Mounts
are there
Transfigured with a lunar grace and rainbow visions fair."

"Turn to the left!" the Zeitgeist still keeps on his endless
way,
The Moonshine Mountains have no grace to tempt his feet to
stray.

He glances at them with his eye, no more do they exist:
They lift and roll away as fog, and float away in mist.

But still the Zeitgeist travels on, oblivious to fears,
Down fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches
through the years.

The Zeitgeist times his marching over mountains and ravines
To the music of an orchestra that plays behind the scenes.

Though we hear not that high, far strain, we march, with all
our peers,
To the music of the footfalls of the Zeitgeist through the
years.

And the music of those footfalls, though we know not what
it means,
Is the music of the orchestra that plays behind the scenes.

So with the Zeitgeist let us march, oblivious to fears,
Down Fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches
through the years.

—*Sun* (N.Y.).

SAM WALTER FOSS.

* The Spirit of the Age.

A PIOUS SCOUNDREL.

THE New York *Herald* publishes the following telegram from Salt Lake City, Utah, dated May 23: "A horrible tragedy, in many respects similar to the murders said to have been committed by Durrant, of San Francisco, has been unearthed in this city. In this case, as in the other, a church was the scene of the crimes, and the victims two women.

The pastor of the church, Rev. Francis Hermann, is accused of the murders.

"The scene of the crimes was the First Scandinavian Church, No. 158 Second East-street.

"Last year the pastor's wife died, and he engaged Miss Clawson, an attractive young woman, twenty-five years old, to look after his apartments in the church building. In September last Miss Clawson suddenly disappeared, and has not been seen alive since. Immediately after her disappearance the pastor, although the weather was hot at that season, ordered a big fire to be built in the furnace in the basement of the church. He sent everybody away, and, lighting the fire himself, kept it going for hours.

"Persons residing in the neighborhood detected exceedingly bad odors at the time, and remonstrated with Hermann; but he said he wanted to give the flues a thorough test before the cold weather came.

"It was in this furnace a few days ago that the body of Miss Clawson, together with blackened razors, a butcher knife, and part of a woman's garter buckles were found.

"The other victim is Miss Annie Samson. She was engaged to be married to the preacher, but mysteriously disappeared in February last, and it is supposed her remains are concealed somewhere about the church.

"The police, who have been secretly working on the case for several weeks, found a barrel, the head of which is covered with human blood; and their theory is that the murderer, after killing his victims, carved them up on the barrel head. Blood stains were also found on the furnace door and floor.

"The Rev. Mr. Hermann, for whose arrest a warrant has been issued on the charge of murder, left Salt Lake City on May 7 for Kansas City, thence went to Decorah, Iowa, on a missionary tour. Since his departure he has not been heard of, and telegrams sent to both Kansas City and Decorah, Iowa, have failed to bring any tidings of him.

"Among his effects here, which are in the hands of the police, are letters, articles of jewelry, and clothing belonging to both the dead girls.

"Hermann is of Scandinavian descent, but was born in England. He is about forty years of age, and exceedingly well educated. He has been married three times, and it is said that all his wives have died under suspicious circumstances.

"In his study were found a large collection of poisons and drugs of various kinds.

"The detectives believe the girls were assaulted and then murdered by the preacher."

The Will.

We speak of the Will as something apart from the feeling or feelings which, for the moment, prevail over others; whereas it is nothing but the general name given to the special feeling that gains supremacy and determines action. Take away all sensations and emotions, and there remains no Will. Excite some of these, and Will, becoming possible, becomes actual only when one of them, or a group of them, gains predominance. Until there is a motive, there is no Will. That is to say, Will is no more an existence separate from the predominant feeling than a king is an existence separate from the man occupying the throne.—*Herbert Spencer, "Principles of Psychology."*

Obituary.

ON Monday, June 1, the funeral of Mrs. Collinson, Mill-lane, Failsworth, took place at the Failsworth Cemetery, where the Secular funeral service was conducted by Mr. Henry Clough, one of the committee of the Secular Schools, in a very impressive manner. A large number of people were present, both in the chapel and at the graveside, to witness the service. Much sympathy is felt with Mr. Collinson and the other members of the family of the deceased. Mrs. Collinson had attended the Secular Sunday School all the days of her life, and a very handsome wreath has been subscribed by the members of the school.

We have to record the death at Saginaw, Michigan, of Mr. J. H. Burnham, a well-known American Freethinker, and writer in the *Truthseeker* and *Boston Investigator*. He was seventy years of age, and his death on May 18 resulted from injuries received from being knocked down by a careless bicycle-rider.

THE CRUCIFIX.

DR. J. B. WILSON, of Cincinnati, writes in the *Blue Grass Blade* on the ghastly influence of the sign of the Cross. He says: "Religion is based on fear, the meanest of emotions. It has its revenge of hell, and never-ending torture of mind and body. It began with disobedience and crime, which God himself permitted. As a consequence, its whole history has been that of crime and the punishment of crime. On account of its crimes against man and nature, the great God-led nation of the Jews fell headlong to its ruin. Christianity followed. Ever since it has done its utmost to keep the crime of the Cross before the public. It glories in picturing the death of its founder. In sculpture and painting it is constantly before the eye. Art has been exhausted in picturing the agonies of the Crucifixion. This horrible picture of death and crime became engraven upon the brains of the human race. It has done more to sow the seeds of criminal viciousness and destructiveness than any object or sentiment that ever existed. Wherever it advanced, war, massacre, and torture followed. It was planted in Greece and Rome, and, as by magic, their glory departed; column and arch tumbled, the arts lay dead, and moral degradation and intellectual darkness followed, such as civilisation had never known before.

"The crucifix is a frightful object, and should be suppressed. The naked and bloody image of Christ, most generally of shocking anatomy, is exhibited in show-windows all over the world. What is more revolting? Such pictures and images should not be publicly exhibited where sensitive women can look upon them.

"If Christ himself were here in Cincinnati, he would be shocked to see such exhibition of his body, and to know that an advertisement is made of his murder in order to awaken sympathy and belief. Michael Servetus and Giordano Bruno suffered a much more horrible death than he. Suppose the Freethinkers would picture their naked, blackened, and half-roasted bodies, and exhibit them in art galleries and shop windows as their patron saints, and thus appeal to the world to accept and believe their doctrines just because Christians burned them at the stake. The Christian world would at once raise a cry of holy horror, not only because such would be an object-lesson of their own evil deeds, but because it would be revolting to every refined sense of taste. Yet they would have the world reverence and tolerate the sickening and disgusting spectacle of the crucifix. Well, we heathen have stood it so long; we can stand it a few centuries longer."

PROFANE JOKES.

Little Trissie went to church the other Sunday, and heard the parson preach on "Creation." Said he: "We are all made from dust." Little Trissie remembered this, and, on arriving home, she asked her mother if it was true what the parson said, "that she was made from dust?" "Yes, my child," responded the mother. "Well," said little Trissie, "you told me, mother, that the snow was on the ground very thick when I was born; where did the dust come from, then?" (Collapse of mother.)

Clerical Visitor (to pew-opener showing church)—"Do you have Matins?" P.-O.—"No, sir; but we have inoleum."

Scruples and Drams.—Weary Traveller—"Threepennyworth of whisky, please." Scotch Landlady—"That'll be saxpence, sir." W.T.—"What! sixpence for threepennyworth!" S. L.—"Yes, sir. Ye ken it's the Sawbath, and we charge double to discountenance drinking and dealing on the Lord's day."

"What does R.I.P. on the tombstones mean, Jim?" "Return Im-Possible."

Clerical Passenger—"Have you attended any of the May or June meetings?" Sporting Ditto—"Well, I went to Lincoln and the Derby, and I mean to go to Ascot."

Teacher—"Why did Joshua cause the sun to stand still?" Tommy—"I guess it didn't agree with his watch."

Be to the best thou knowest ever true,
Is all the creed.

Then, be thy talisman of rosy hue,
Or fenced with thorns that wearing thou must bleed,
Or gentle pledge of love's prophetic view,
Thy faithful steps it will securely lead.

—Margaret Fuller.

BOOK CHAT.

It is a striking fact that wherever the Jews are persecuted they are bigoted, and whenever given the full rights of citizens they are enlightened in their religion. The American Jew is often a Freethinking Jew. Their rabbis, in several cases, have become heads of ethical societies. In some synagogues little beyond duties founded on Deism is taught. A brochure, entitled *Judaism: An Exposition*, by the Rev. Barnett A. Elzas, Rabbi of K. K., Beth Elohim, Charleston, has been forwarded to us by a friend in that city. Judaism, as described by Rabbi Elzas, is a creed to which Thomas Paine could have subscribed. It regards character as the main thing, and creeds and ceremonies as non-essential.

The exposition of Judaism is given in the form of a catechism. Here is a specimen:—

Q. 5. What are the characteristics of Judaism?

A. (1) Its liberality towards those both within and without its pale. To its own members it allows the widest difference of opinion; and, as for others, it proclaims that, no matter what a man's creed is, so long as his conduct is right it will be well with him in the great Hereafter.

(2) Its absolute reasonableness. There is nothing in it that demands credulity or blind faith. It has scarcely anything in it that may be called dogma. It is simple, exalted, and well-fitted for acceptance by all mankind.

Of the Bible Rabbi Elzas says: "Some claim that the Bible is God's revelation of his will to man. We cannot agree with this. We look upon the Bible simply as a collection of the Hebrew literature up to a certain date. It is composed of many books of varying value, and of a most miscellaneous character. In those books we find history, poetry, philosophy, prophecy, moral teaching, maxims for guidance in life, and even legends. Such a miscellany can scarcely be regarded as the Revelation of God's will to man. The Bible contains much that will help us to carry out God's will. Conscience, if properly developed, will contribute its share, but for the final and absolute record of that Revelation we must look elsewhere"—viz., to "the Book of Nature."

What, then, are the distinguishing tenets of Judaism? Rabbi Elzas admits the Jews are not alone in teaching one God and a future life, but he regards these as being the principles of a world-religion, which it is the mission of Israel to establish until error and superstition shall be no more, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. It is needless to say we do not regard this as the upshot of evolution. But Rabbi Elza's exposition is both interesting and able, though it rather suggests that liberal Judaism, by broad spreading, is dispersing almost to nothing.

The Wonders of the Microscope and Design in Creation, by Edward Poulson (preacher of the Gospel and Christian Evidence Lecturer), is a fourpenny pamphlet designed to display the being of a God, and to advertise the writer's microscopes, which prove it, especially the compound ones with $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch objective, stand condenser, diaphragm, double mirror, etc. The Atheist who is not convinced by the sight of wriggling animalculæ contained in every drop of water may stand a chance of remaining so until the end of the chapter.

L'Idée de Dieu, by Emile Couret (Paris: 4 Rue de Saintonge), is the first of a series of brochures on "*Les Plaies Sociales*" (Social Plagues). M. Couret holds that "*le grand horloger de l'univers*" is as much a myth as Jupiter. As to the design argument, he holds that design betrays imperfection. He combats the belief in God, since it is the support of all pretence of authority, the justification for the world as it is standing in the way of the world as it might be. He holds that the world without the vain service of God will be a brighter and better dwelling-place for man. The price is 15 centimes.

Mr. H. S. Salt writes as follows in a reply to the *New Age*, which, in a review of his book on Shelley, insists that a distinction must be drawn between the man and the artist:—"Your reviewer has merely burlesqued my contention that Shelley the man must be appreciated by those who would (fully) appreciate Shelley the poet. My position is this, that if we wish thoroughly to understand a great writer like Shelley, we must study him as a whole, and not dissociate the character of the man from the achievement of the artist. It is childish to ask, as your reviewer does, whether those who hear Sarasate 'care a jot what the great violinist's domestic relations may be.' Of course they don't, for the simple reason that they are not studying his life-work, but seeking an immediate pleasure from hearing him

play the violin, just as thousands of readers have delighted in Shelley's lyrics, without a further thought as to the personality of the poet. But if we are trying to take a deeper view than this, and not looking at isolated artistic efforts, but at the whole fabric of a man's art, then it becomes important to the biographer or critic to know, in other respects, what manner of man he is studying; for, impossible though it may be to perceive an exact relation between all the various forms in which a great personality expresses itself, we must surely feel that they are in some manner related."

Two Scotch kail-yard novelists, "Ian Maclaren" (the Rev. J. Watson) and the Rev. S. R. Crockett, and one Manxman, Mr. Hall Caine, are said to be engaged on Lives of Jesus. We always thought this was a theme for romance. Neither Renan nor Farrar could make anything else out of it; and the sooner the subject is left to professional novelists the better. The old romancers padded out their stories with miracles, but the new variety will probably see the advantage of substituting love episodes in deference to modern taste.

The denunciations of the Woman's Bible, edited by Mrs. Stanton, have only increased its circulation. The entire first edition has been sold out, and a second has been issued by the European Publishing Co., 35 Wall-street, New York. No copy has been sent to us as yet.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IN A "CHRISTIAN" COMMUNITY.
TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A poor muffin man at Portsmouth was recently prosecuted for ringing a bell in the streets on the "Sawbath" to announce his approach to his customers, and the law compelled him to desist. Yet, on the same day of the week, the air is rendered horridous in every town and village in Christendom with tinkling bells, etc., which these self-same Christians cause to be rung in order that a parson's customers may know when to be ready in their "go-to-meetings" for the purpose of worshipping God, and of listening to the drawl, not of a muffin man, 'tis true, but of a *muff in man's* image.

H. N.

THE MYSTERY OF PAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your interesting paper of June 7 contains an article by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, "On Pain," and his own personal suffering seems to have inspired it. I hope his pangs may not be of long duration. Mr. Wheeler mentions the fact that anaesthetics, on their introduction, were denounced as attempts to thwart the divine decree, and in an interesting note your readers are informed of the fact that Sir James Y. Simpson was accused of antagonising the curse of God, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."

Nearly forty years ago, when I was attending Sir James Simpson's lectures, I well remember the Professor quoting the above passage from Genesis, and informing his class that he had been blamed for giving chloroform in mid-wifery cases, and that it was wrong to thus enable women to evade the pain ordained by God. Professor Simpson's answer was inimitable and very amusing, as he simply quoted a part of the curse which the Hebrew legend makes God to have uttered against the ground—"thorns, also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field"—and informed those who said he was wrong to assuage the pain of child-birth, that they also were wrong to cultivate the soil and prevent it bringing forth thorns and thistles according to divine decree.

W. R. HORNIBLOW, M.D.

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- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window,

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.15, G. W. Foote, "Thomas Hardy's Novels, and Why the Bishop of Wakefield Burns Them."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, Stanley Jones, "The Church and Science." Saturday, June 21, at 8.30, a concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "Freethought and the Child."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, Miss E. J. Troup will lecture.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): T. J. Thurlow, "An Hour with a Famous Convert to Christianity."

ISLINGTON BRANCH: 8.30, Special general meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Prayer."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road) 11.30, E. Pack, "Wait till You are on your Death-bed."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 8.15, C. James, "Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?"

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr. Easton will lecture.

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Branch: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Woman"; 8.15, A. B. Moss, "Dead Gods."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, F. Haslam, "Who Was Jesus, and What did he Teach?" Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?" 3.30, R. Rosetti, "The Russian Gods." Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 10.45, Lucretius Keen will lecture.

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?"

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "How to Revise the Bible."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Some Bible Stories."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 8.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BARNSELY (Black-a-moor Head Hotel): 6.30, W. Dyson, "The History of Theism."

HECKMONDWIKK (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): 7, A discussion on "Christianity Man's Only Salvation."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, A Theosophist, "Theosophy and Wagner's Music."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Annual Picnic by 9.20 train to Chester. Assemble at station at 9 o'clock.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 7, Annual meeting; election of officers.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): E. Evans—3, "The Dust we Tread On was once Alive"; 7, "Modern Science the Glory of the Age." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): Picnic at Holywell Dene; brakes leave North Shields at 1 p.m.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSELY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "The Man who Conquered England."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 14, m., Finsbury Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford. 11, Chester-le-Street. 21, Newcastle-on-Tyne. 25, Hyde Park. 28, m., Clerkenwell-green; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 14, m., Mile End; a., Finsbury Park. 21, m., Camberwell; a., Victoria Park; 28, m. Wood Green; e. Edmonton. July 5, m., Westminster; a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn. 12, Northampton.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

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