

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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MORE CONVERTED INFIDELS.

CONVERTING infidels is a remarkably easy work—on paper. Stories of such conversions are generally got up tastily for the Christian market. They rarely bear a close inspection. Our readers remember what a small residuum of truth there was in the Atheist Shoemaker story. The Shoemaker was a fact, but the Atheist was a fiction. If that makes the story true, then the story of the Flood is true, for there is certainly a mountain called Ararat. Another story which turned out to be a fable was the Glasgow conversion related in the *Joyful News*. Mr. Gilmour and other Glasgow friends got on the track of the writer of this circumstantial falsehood. Of course he declined to give any further information. He stood upon his dignity—like the gentlemen in the prisoners' dock, who nearly all plead Not Guilty with an air of insulted innocence. But he had already given himself away, for his converted Freethinker was conspicuously mutilated, having only one hand and a stump; and the one-hand-and-a-stump Freethought orator cannot be found in Glasgow, nor is there any recollection of him in the mind of the oldest inhabitant.

But in spite of exposure there is a perennial vitality in these edifying fables. They serve their turn. They impose on the credulous Christians. They stimulate a flagging zeal, and quicken the flow of dilatory subscriptions.

We are not surprised, therefore, to meet with another of these pious yarns in the *Sunday Companion*. A grand Whitsuntide number of this godly periodical contains the seventh of a series of "Stories from the Diary of a Chaplain," by J. Harwood Panting. It is entitled "How I Met the Infidel." We have read it carefully, and we should like to see the other side of the picture; that is to say, we should like to have the Infidel's story of "How I Met the Chaplain."

We have no knowledge of Mr. Panting. Whether he is still panting, or whether he has panted his last pant, is beyond the scope of our information. There is, apparently, a picture of him accompanying the story, with his hand on a boy's head, while his eyes stare into infinitude. The reverend gentleman is supposed to be "praying aloud," though his mouth is closed. He is sending an open letter to God Almighty, and publishing it to the crowd. On the other side of the boy is the boy's father, the bold bad Atheist, perched on a little platform, from which he has been haranguing the said crowd. The bold bad Atheist wears a startled, discomforted look. Evidently the parson praying aloud is one (if not a dozen) too many for him.

The bold bad Atheist is called Brigden. His real name is Henry Ware. He has done two years for thieving. He hails from Leicester, where he fell under the dreadful influence of "a rabid Freethinker, one Pincott." Freethinkers in these stories are generally rabid. It is wonderful that they are not included in the muzzling order. Of course the rabid Pincott makes Ware as rabid as himself. In this state (presumably) they get married, both on the same day, and at the registrar's office, for they scoff at the religious ceremonial. Then they set up in business together. But the rabid Pincott soon pays the penalty for teaching Ware "his pernicious doctrines," for the latter takes to a life of immorality and runs away with a hundred pounds of the former's money, for which Atheistic performance he enjoys a good spell of Her Majesty's hospitality. It was natural that he should change his name

afterwards, and just as natural that he should spout Atheism from street corners—and the nearer to a church the better.

Atheists in these stories are nearly always tailors or shoemakers. Sedentary occupations lead to thinking, and thinking leads to infidelity. Henry Ware was a tailor. He is now supposed to be in heaven, probably making wing-cases for the angels, or bathing suits for those who take a morning dip in the River of Life, before basking in the Sun of Righteousness.

The reverend Panting has heard of this ex-convict apostle of infidelity, and goes out one summer evening to see and hear him. He finds the Atheist on a stool, spouting blasphemy to fifty or sixty persons. "He was a thin, pale-faced man, with high cheek-bones, and prominent, restless eyes." His reading had been confined to the "shallow, flippant cynicisms" of Voltaire and Tom Paine, with which he "dared to interpret the profound truths of Holy Writ." Shocked at the Atheist's profane dedication of his boy to the service of the Devil, the reverend Panting steps forward in the spirit of the Lord, places his hand on the boy's head (the boy takes to it kindly), and implores God's protection of the dear youth. And this is what follows:—

"I prayed with earnestness. The scoffer's voice was silent, and a hush had fallen on the throng [fifty or sixty persons]. When I had finished, the man tried to speak again; but the people would not listen to him, and called upon me.

"And so I spoke to them—I know not for how long. Yet when I had finished the night had deepened, the crowd had grown immensely, and there was scarce a dry eye among them."

Evidently the reverend Panting's besetting sin is not modesty.

Some time afterwards the man of God visits the Atheist at "a flat in Borough-road." The Atheist locks the door, so as to have a nice private conversation. The fact is, he suspects the reverend Panting of getting him dismissed from his employment, and in the course of conversation he pulls out a revolver. After telling the man of God to prepare for emigration to glory, he pulls the trigger, but the bullet misses its mark, and the Atheist cannot fire again, for, in answer to the man of God's prayer, the Atheist is stricken with paralysis. The wretched creature is taken to the hospital, where he eventually dies, not, however, without fully realising that the man of God was his friend, and that "he had a still greater Friend above."

"Still" is good. It is so modest. God Almighty is even greater than the Rev. Panting. We congratulate him on this magnanimous admission. At the same time, we beg him to continue his confidences. Will he tell us the exact position of the flat in the Borough-road? Will he also tell us the precise time when it was occupied by Henry Ware, alias Brigden, the Atheist lecturer? Our object in desiring this information is perfectly legitimate. We wish to prove the truthfulness (or otherwise) of the reverend gentleman's story. And as he knows it will bear the closest investigation—unless he knows the contrary—he should be anxious to assist us in our inquiries.

Mark, the Atheist's boy, was suffering, at the time of the attempted murder, from an acute attack of bronchitis. Of course he recovered. He was reserved for better things. What became of him "I must leave to another story," says the reverend Panting. This is followed by the announcement of "*Another grand story next week.*"

We are always glad to read grand stories. Still, we

prefer history to fiction—at least in such matters. We therefore invite the reverend gentleman to give us an introduction to “little Mark Brigden.” Meanwhile we beg to state that we never so much as heard of his oratorical father. Brigden or Ware is not the name of any Atheist lecturer known to the Freethinkers of London. In this respect there is a strong affinity between the “Brigden” of the reverend Panting and the “Herbert” of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

Seriously, we must express our disgust at these “penny plain and twopence colored” stories of converted infidels. They show what a depth of credulity still exists in Christian circles. They also show what a height of imposture still exists in Christian ministers. They are “thin” to the verge of transparency. It is really wonderful that they find such patronage at the end of the nineteenth century.

Christianity has always been largely supported by lying for the glory of God, and now that it is perishing we see its ruling passion strong in death. There is really no room for the Protestants to rail at the Catholics in this respect. Both sides have been, and still are, ready with the convenient falsehood and the profitable invention. The end sanctifies the means. All is honorable that tends to edification. The doctrine of economy—that is, making a little truth go a very long way—is common to all Churches. Between them, they have flooded Europe with fables; and one is tempted to quote the last line of one of Browning’s poems—“Lies, lies again, and still they lie!”

G. W. FOOTE.

ORTHODOX IMMORALITY.

WE have no quarrel with Christianity when it teaches peace and goodwill to men. We only claim that it has no monopoly of virtue. All the duties which it inculcates were taught by heathens before it came into the world. There is nothing distinctive in its morality. Jews, Buddhists, Moslems, Hindus, and Confucians alike teach the same principles of the behavior necessary to civilised society. What alone is distinctive of Christianity is its dogmas, and these, in our opinion, are in no way conducive to morality, but in some cases decidedly unfavorable thereto.

Take first its central doctrine of the Atonement. The idea of making the just suffer for the unjust is radically immoral. It makes God worse than a Shylock, for He not only will have His pound of flesh, but takes it from the wrong party. A doctrine which transfers guilt from the criminal to the innocent is contrary to justice. Beyond the barbarity of ascribing efficacy to blood, to rest on salvation by another is to weaken self-reliance and injure the moral fibre. The sinner’s consolation is, “Jesus pays for all.” The unbeliever has no such excuse. He knows that all the blood of all the gods ever spawned from the fertile imagination of man cannot loosen the inexorable bonds of cause and effect.

Then take the doctrine of Salvation by Faith. Luther inveighed against the Romish doctrine of indulgences as procuring immunity to the sinner on a system of cash payments, while he himself taught a doctrine of immunity on yet easier terms. True he had Pauline authority (Galatians ii. 16), and is backed up by the eighteenth article of the Church of England, which proclaims: “They also are to be held accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the Light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.” But what doctrine ever taught is more immoral? If the thief on the cross, after, perhaps, a life-long course of villainy, goes straight to Paradise; if there is more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance; if saving grace may be obtained at the eleventh hour by the cry, “I do believe,” where is the incentive to a life of honest devotion to principle? The doctrines, that Jesus has made an atonement for sin, and that true faith and repentance at the last moment, even *in articulo mortis*, are sufficient to blot out a life of sin, serve to place a premium on crime. Orthodox Christianity makes faith and penitence of more consequence than right conduct. The murderer, washed in

the blood of the Lamb, goes straight to glory; while the victim, “cut off even in the blossom of his sin, no reckoning made, but sent to his account with all his imperfections on his head,” is doomed to eternal perdition because unrepentant. Could any Pagan doctrine more discourage morality? Past sins—nay, a whole life of selfish disregard for others, if repented of before death—are a far less obstacle to entrance into Paradise than the most exemplary life, if unaccompanied by true faith in the Christian Savior. What is this but to discountenance righteousness, making it but the “filthy rags” of which the prophet speaks?

Take the doctrine of Divine Omniscience. Its tendency is to rob men of the sense of responsibility, and to throw the blame of all their vices and miseries on God. If all is fore-decreed, what is the use of human endeavor? Calvinism is the only logical form of Theism; but it is open to the objection against all forms of fatalism, that it diminishes self-reliance.

Take the doctrine of total natural depravity. Its tendency is to make believers despair of being good, and to dispose them to excuse themselves when they do wrong. If they are corrupt trees, how can they do otherwise than bear bad fruit? If a man believes there is nothing good in him, how can he be expected to try and bring good out? If he believes that he is full of all evil, small wonder if he allows much evil to appear. How convenient a scape-goat, too, is the orthodox Christian Devil. If Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (1 Cor. xi. 14), how can a weak man be expected to withstand his temptations? Can it tend to humanity or common justice to believe that “he that believeth not shall be damned” (Matthew xvi. 16), that God “sends strong delusions that they should believe a lie” (2 Thess. ii. 11), and that he hath “mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Romans ix. 18)?

What advantage can any human being derive from the belief that the whole of the Bible is the word of God; that he inspired all its barbarous and brutal laws, ordered the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanites, and sanctioned and shared in the abominations perpetrated on the daughters of Midian; that he wants us to believe, or to say we believe, all its absurd stories and its often contradictory teachings?

What value to any mortal is the belief in the Trinity? In what way can it promote justice, temperance, kindness, or truth? Children, juggled with the words that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are not three Gods, but one God, are not likely to be made any more straightforward by such teaching. Indeed, the wriggling subterfuges by which absurdities are explained as mysteries tend towards dishonesty and hypocrisy.

What benefit can be derived from the doctrine of the Incarnation? Does it give any encouragement to philanthropy or purity? On the contrary, it may easily be construed into a reflection on marriage, and a libel on true fatherhood and motherhood. What benefit can anyone derive from such a story of a fatherless, but not motherless, child? Is anyone really made the better by believing that the Jews crossed the Red Sea dry shod, or that Jesus walked on the water and ascended through the clouds? No; the safety of morality, as Huxley said, does not lie in the adoption of this or that philosophical speculation, or this or that theological creed, but in a real and living belief in the fixed order of nature, which sends social disintegration upon the track of immorality as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespass.

Let it, then, be distinctly understood that Freethinkers do not reject the moral teachings of Christianity, though they reject the supernatural foundations upon which its ethics are based. They accept good, “wherever found, on sceptic, heathen, or on Christian ground.” What they reject is the distinctive dogmas of Christianity, which they hold to be immoral. Their objection to Christianity is that it is not good enough. Their hearts as well as their heads have outgrown it.

J. M. WHEELER.

The greater the knowledge, the greater the doubt.—*Goethe*.

If we are born for heaven, we are lost for earth.—*L. Feuerbach*.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ETHICAL METHOD OF CONTROVERSY.

"It was one of the secrets of my craft in the old days, when I wanted to weld iron or work steel to a fine purpose, to begin gently. If I began, as all learners do, to strike my heaviest blows at the start, the iron would crumble instead of welding, or the steel would suffer under my hammer, so that when it came to be tempered it would 'fly,' as we used to say, and rob the thing I had made of its finest quality."—ROBERT COLLYER, D.D.

"THEY who believe that they have Truth ask no favor, save that of being heard; they dare the judgment of mankind; refused co-operation, they invoke opposition, for opposition is their opportunity." This was the maxim I wrote at the beginning of the Secularistic movement, to show that we were willing to accept ourselves the controversy, which we contended was the sole means of establishing truth. No proposition, as Samuel Bailey showed, is to be trusted until it has been tested by very wide discussion. We soon found that the free and open field of Milton was not sufficient. It needed a "fair" as well as a "free and open encounter." Disputants require to be equally matched in debate as in arms.

The Secularist policy is to accept the purely moral teaching of the Bible, and to controvert its theology, in such respects as it contradicts and discourages ethical effort. Yet theological questions are always sought to be forced upon us. The Rev. Henry Townley followed me to the *Leader* office (1853-4) to induce me to discuss the question of the "existence of God." I never had done so, and objected that it would give the impression that Secularism was Atheistic. He was so insistent and importunate that I consented to discuss the question with him. Never after did I do so with anyone. The Rev. Brewin Grant endeavored to get my acceptance of propositions which pledged me to a wild opposition to Christianity. Mr. Samuel Morley, honorable in all things, admitted I had objected to it, but in the end I assented to it, that the discussion might not be broken off. Thomas Cooper was persistent that I should discuss with him the authenticity of the Scriptures. What I proposed was the proposition that the authenticity of the Scripture, its miracles, and prophecies are quite apart from moral truth.

The discussion took place in the city of York, lasting five nights. Canon Robinson and Canon Hey presided alternately. Mr. Cooper was an able man in dealing with the stock propositions of Christianity; but their relevance as tests of morality was an entirely new subject to him. He protested rather than reasoned, and declared he would never discuss the question of the ethical test of the truth of Scriptures; nor have I ever found any responsible minister willing to do so down to this day. Thus Christians should condemn with reservation the tendency in Secularists to debate theology, seeing how reluctant they are to do otherwise themselves. Christians seem incapable of understanding how much the objection to their cause arises in the revolt of the moral sense against it.

On first meeting Richard Carlile in 1842, some years before Secularism took a distinctive form, he invited me to hear him lecture upon the principles of the *Christian Warrior*,* of which he was editor, and to give my opinion thereon. In doing so I explained the ideas from which I have never departed—namely, that no theologic, astronomic, or miraculous mode of proving Scriptural doctrine could ever be made even intelligible, except to students of very considerable research. Such theories, I contended, must rest, more or less, on critical and conjectural interpretation, and could never enable a working man to dare the understanding of others in argument. Scientific interpretation laid entirely outside Christian acquirements, and seemed to Christians disingenuous evasion of what they took to be obvious truths. My contention was that the people have no historic or critical knowledge enabling them to determine the divine origin of Christianity.

On the platform he who has most knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin will always be able to silence any dissentient who has not equal information. If by accident a controversialist happen to possess this knowledge, it

goes for nothing unless he has credit for classical competency. In controversy of this nature it is not enough for a man to know; he must be known to know before his conclusions can command attention. To myself it was not of moment whether the Scriptures were authentic or inspired. My sole inquiry was, Did they contain clear moral guidance? If they did, I accepted that guidance with gratitude. If I found maxims obviously useful and true, judged by human experience, I adopted them, whether given by inspiration or not. If precepts did not answer to this test, they were not acceptable, though all the apostles in session had signed them. To miracles I did not object, nor did I see any sense in endeavoring to explain them away. We all have reason to regret that no one performs them now. It was our misfortune that the power, delegated with so much pomp of promise to the saints, had not descended to these days. If any preacher or deacon could, in our day, feed five thousand men on a few loaves and a few small fishes, and leave as many baskets of fragments as would run a workhouse for a month, the Poor Law Commissioners would make a king of that saint. But if a precept enjoined me to believe what was not true, it would be a base precept, and all the miracles in the Scriptures could not alter its character; while, if a precept be honest and just, no miracle is wanted to attest it; indeed, a miracle to allure credence in it would only cast suspicion on its genuineness. The moral test of the Scriptures was sufficient, since it had the commanding advantage of appealing to the common sense of all sorts and conditions of men, of Christian or of Pagan persuasion. Ethical criticism has this further merit, that on the platform of discussion the miner, the weaver, or farm laborer is on the same level as the priest. A man goes to heaven upon his own judgment; whereas, if his belief is based on the learning of others, he goes to heaven second-hand.

When Mr. J. A. Froude wrote for John Henry Newman the *Life of St. Belletin*, he ended with the words: "And this is all that is known, and more than all, of the life of a servant of God." In the Bible there appears to be a great deal more than was ever known. This does not concern the Secularist, though it does the scholar. If there be moral maxims in the Scripture, what does it matter how they got there?

CHAPTER XVIII.

ITS DISCRIMINATION.

"There is nothing so terrible as activity without insight."—GOETHE.

In 1847 I commenced in the *Reasoner* what I entitled "The Moral Remains of the Bible"—a selection of some splendid moral stories, incidents, and sentences having ethical characteristics such as I doubted not would "remain" when the Bible came to be regarded as a human book. I wrote a "Logic of Life."* My *Trial of Theism* was only "as accused of obstructing secular life," as stated on the title-page. The object was to show how much useful criticism could be entered upon without touching the questions of authenticity, or miracles, or the existence of deity. Thus it was left to opponents to declare that things morally incredible were inspired by God. In this case it was not I, but they, who blasphemed.

Take the case of Samson's famous engagement with the Philistines at Ramath—Lehi surrounded by a band of warlike Philistines (though, as the text implies, 3,000 of his own armed countrymen were at hand). Samson, who had no weapon, was not given one by them, but had to look about for a "new jawbone of an ass." With this singular instrument he killed, one after the other, a thousand Philistine soldiers, who were big, strong men, and, unless every blow was fatal, it must have taken several blows to kill some of them.

Are there three places in the human body where a single blow will be sure to kill a man? Did Samson know those places? and was he always able to direct his blow with unerring precision to one or other of those particular spots? If the thousand Philistines "surrounded" him, how did he keep the others off while he struggled with the one he was killing? It is not conceivable that the Philistines stood there to be killed, and meekly submitted to ignoble blows,

* Companion to the "Logic of Death," both contained in the *Trial of Theism*.

* The last periodical Mr. Carlile edited.

death, and degradation. The jawbone must have been of strange texture to have crashed through armor, and have turned aside spears and swords of stalwart warriors without chipping, splitting, or breaking in two. What time it must have taken Samson to pursue each man, beat off his comrades, drag him from their midst, give him the asinine *coup de grâce*, drag and cast his dead body upon the "heaps" of slain he was piling up! What struggling, scuffling, and turmoil of blood and blows Samson must have gone through! Spurred all over with blood, Barnum would have bought him for a Dime Museum as the deepest-colored Red Indian known. No Deerfoot could have been nimbler than Samson must have been on this mighty day. When this Herculean fight was over, which, with the utmost expedition, must have occupied Samson six days—which would give 166 killed single handed per day—the only effect produced upon Samson appears to have been that he was "soreathirst." Even after this extraordinary use of the jawbone it was in such good condition that, a hollow place being "clave" in it, a fount of water gushed forth for refreshing this remarkable warrior. Were it not recorded in the Bible, it would be said that the writer intended to imply that the jawbone of the ass is to be found only in the mouth of the reader.

Can it need miracle or prophecy, authenticity or inspiration, to attest this story of the Jewish Jack-the-Giant-killer? What moral good can arise from a narration which it is reverence to reject? By leaving it to the Christian to say it is given by "inspiration" of God, it is he who blasphemes. But if the question of authenticity were raised, the character of the narrative would be lost sight of, and would not come into question; while the test of moral probability decides the invalidity of the story within the compass of the knowledge of an ordinary audience.

In the same manner, keeping to the policy of affirmation, he who maintains the self-existence, the self-action and eternity of the universe can be met only by those who defame nature as a second-hand tool of God. Such are Atheists towards Nature, the author of their existence, and God must so regard them.

A single precept of Christ's, "Take no thought for the morrow," has bred swarms of mendicants in every age since his day; but a far more dangerous precept is "Resist not evil," which has made Christianity welcome to so many tyrants. Christ, whatever other sentiments he had, had a slave heart. Every friend of freedom knows that "resistance is the backbone of the world." The patriot poet* exclaims:—

Land of our Fathers—in their hour of need
God help them, guarded by the passive creed.

No miracle could make these precepts true, and he who proved their authenticity would be the enemy of mankind.

Whether Christ existed or not affected in no way what excellence and inimitableness there was in his delineated character. His offer of palpable materialistic evidence to Thomas showed that he recognised the right of scepticism to relevant satisfaction. His concession of proof in this case needed no supernatural testimony to render it admirable.

The reader will now see what the policy of Secularist advocacy is—mainly to test theology by its ethical import. To many all policy is restraint; they cry down policy, and erect blundering into a virtue. Whereas policy is guidance to a chosen end. Mathematics is but policy of measurement; grammar but the policy of speech; logic but the policy of reason; arithmetic but the policy of calculation; temperance but the policy of health; trigonometry but the policy of navigation; roads but the policy of transit; music but the policy of controlling sound; art but the policy of beauty; law but the policy of protection; discipline but the policy of strength; love but the policy of affection. An enemy may object to an adversary having a policy, because he is futile without one. The policy adopted may be bad, but no policy at all is idiocy, and commits a cause to the providence of Bedlam.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

The system of morals propounded in the New Testament contained no maxim which had not been previously enunciated.—*H. T. Buckle.*

* Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes.

FREETHOUGHT REQUIREMENTS.

THE progress of Freethought during the last few years has been marvellous. Its advancement has not been confined to one section of society, but it has penetrated into every domain, both of public and private life. In science, politics, ethics, works of fiction, and the domestic circle, theology has lost the sway it once held. A broader and more liberal tone of thought prevails in all departments of human existence. The limited freedom which a quarter of a century ago satisfied the aspirations of mankind is now found quite inadequate to meet the enlarged demands created by the ever-growing desire for increased mental liberty.

By Freethought we mean an intellectual condition unfettered by theological considerations. A true Freethinker is one who acts independently of all supernatural beliefs, and whose actions are regulated purely by a concern as to their influence upon mundane affairs. No thought can be free if it is hampered by hopes of heaven or fears of hell. Neither can intellectual freedom co-exist with the anxiety to please God, to gratify the priest, and to adhere to the fashion of popular religious worship. All such considerations must necessarily tend to cramp the mental faculties and bind thought by the narrow traditions of the past. Herein Secular Freethought manifests its potency and indicates its onward march. The human mind has become so developed through modern culture that it rebels against the restraint imposed by creeds and dogmas.

This progress and freedom are the result of a persistent and rational warfare against the encroachments of the Church and the influence of the priests. The conflict has been a long and severe one. Freethinkers have had arrayed against them wealth, power, and deep-rooted prejudice; but through a determined and never-ceasing struggle those obstacles have been, to a large extent, overcome, and to-day we stand upon the vantage ground of a glorious victory. Further triumphs, however, have to be won, and it behoves us, as Secularists, to consider the best plan to adopt, in order that additional successes may be achieved. So far as we remember, a better opportunity never existed in the Freethought movement to obtain decisive progress than at the present time. The most intellectual portions of society have grown weary of theological shams and priestly interference; the yearnings for personal liberty and independent thought are stronger than ever; the exposition of our principles is listened to with respectful attention; an active propaganda is being carried on every Sunday in London and the provinces, both in the open air and in halls; our literature commands an extensive sale; our lecturers, young and old, are ever ready and willing to do their duty in expounding our views; and one and all of the workers in the good cause are inspired with the consciousness that they have truth on their side. Surely, with these advantages in our favor, it is our duty to find out all that can be done to enhance the value and usefulness of Secular philosophy; and, having discovered what to do, to do it with all our might. Our readers know already what has recently been accomplished through the aid of Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme; how the banner of Freethought has been carried into the theological camp, and a knowledge of our aims and objects imparted therein. More of this work is required; the good results that have hitherto followed the working of this scheme bid us hope for even greater results in the future. It must be remembered that under Mr. Foote's plan lectures are given to the public free, and upon our ability to extend this feature in our advocacy will depend much of the success which we hope to ensure.

There is no doubt that all the sections of the Freethought party are more desirous than ever of seeing our propagandist efforts consolidated, and we have been asked by several friends to state our views as to the best means of bringing this about. Of course, there is no question with any of us as to the truth and value of the principles we hold dear, any more than there is in reference to the marked progress, during the last decade, that those principles have made. The point we are concerned about at present is to discover, if possible, an improved method of action, whereby the greatest good of the greatest number may become an accomplished fact. In other words, what is required so that Freethought may be placed in that position before the public which its merits deserve? In our opinion, such requirements are as follows:—

(1) A judicious blending of the destructive and constructive mode of advocacy. In the face of the present conduct of the clerical party upon the education question it is a mistake to suppose that the time is passed for destructive work. Theology is still our active enemy, and one that we must fight with all the energy at our command. Let, however, such work be done with discretion; while we seek to destroy error we should be careful to show that we have truth to replace it.

(2) Every Freethinker should deem it a personal duty to assist in propagandist work. The labor of conducting the operations of a Branch of the National Secular Society is too often left to a few individuals. This is unfair and unjust; it deprives our principles of much of their legitimate influence. Those who have escaped from the snares of theology should not forget that there are many who are still unemancipated. The enjoyment of the advantages of Freethought has been obtained through the dauntless efforts of the fighters in our movement; and surely gratitude should prompt that assistance ought to be given to the toilers who are now engaged in perpetuating the struggle for mental liberty. Each member of the National Secular Society can do *something* towards extending its usefulness, either by active work, advice, or his or her presence at its meetings. To do whichever of these services is possible to the individual member is a secular duty, and if it were performed encouragement would be thereby given to all concerned in the welfare and progress of the Society. We have to contend against fearful odds, and the assistance of all friends of Freethought is required. We earnestly appeal for that assistance in order that the noble work of the brave pioneers of the past may produce its fullest beneficial results.

(3) It is useless to ignore a self-evident fact, that no movement can be successfully conducted without financial support. The various religious denominations have discovered this to be true. Without money they could do but little. So it is with us; our labors are limited through the want of the "sinews of war." A few friends are ever generous, but it ought not to be confined to the few. All who can should help financially in the present struggle. It is proposed to carry on a discriminate propaganda in London, and in all the large provincial towns, against the aggressive policy of the Church, and the priestly attempt to dominate the education of the rising generation. This is one of the principal requirements of Freethought, and we sincerely hope that the effort will receive the support its importance demands.

We have written plainly because we feel earnestly upon the subject. The Freethought movement has played an important part in the reforms of the past, and it ought to be equally potent in the present crisis. We want to see practical work done, and we ask the co-operation of all who are willing to aid in accomplishing it.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE CHOICE.

Whether wilt thou choose to praise
Him who fears to turn aside
From the smoothly-beaten ways
Which the crowd have trampled wide,
But goes thoughtless all his days,
Soulless, slave, but sanctified?

Or the man of men who hath,
With undaunted heart and might,
Trampled out a newer path
Through the storm-winds of the night,
Whilst red shapes of rage and wrath
Glared at him from left and right?

Whether wilt thou rather choose
To applaud in his snug place
Him who, when bad men abuse
Fellow men, with shameless face
Says: "The sacredness of use
Takes away this thing's disgrace"?

Or the man with might to spurn
The oppressor from the way,
Crying, with proud lip and stern:—
"Dog! if all dogs have their day,
Thine is over; go, return
To the hell that gave thee sway!"

PYRITES.

THOU SHALT NOT SUFFER A WITCH TO LIVE.

(Exodus xiii. 18.)

WITCH prosecution, with its terrors of torture and the fagot, was only the main result of the belief in a personal devil. There are other consequences which, though less important, are sometimes bad enough in themselves. We mention a few of them: (1) There were persons who actually tried to make contracts with the Devil; (2) people possessed of a lively imagination began to dream that they stood in all kinds of relation to the Evil One—there are cases in which imaginary witches surrendered themselves voluntarily to the Inquisition; (3) soldiers entertained the hope of rendering themselves bullet-proof; and (4) there were plenty of fools who tried to become rich by magic.

The inquisitors and witch prosecutors were by no means scoundrels pure and simple. Most assuredly there were scoundrels among them, but there is no doubt that the movement of the Inquisition and witch prosecution took its origin from purer motives. It was to the popes and grand inquisitors, and to many princes and other people who promoted the policy, a matter of conscience; they simply attended to it as a religious duty, sometimes even with a heavy heart, and not without great pain.

Torquemada, the grand inquisitor of Spain, was, in his private life, one of the purest and most conscientious of men, and he was so tender-hearted that he was obliged to leave the inquisitorial tribunal, and quit the room as soon as the torture of a heretic began. He would cry about the obstinacy of those who had given themselves over to Satan; but, though his heart was bleeding, he condemned thousands and thousands to the cruellest tortures and the most dreadful death, for the sake of salvation and the glory of God—of that monster-god in whom he believed, that abominable idol which was worse than the Moloch of ancient Phœnicia.

When complaints reached Pope Innocent III. about the cruelty of Conrad of Marburg, the first Inquisitor-General of Germany, he said: "The Germans were always furious, and therefore needed furious judges." Pope Leo X., referring to cases of witchcraft that happened in Brixen and Bergamo, grieves, in a brief of 1521, at "the obstinacy of the culprits, who would rather die than confess their crimes." In the same document the Holy Father complains about the impiety of the Venetian Senate, who prevented the inquisitors from performing their duties. And similar expressions are not unfrequent in later papal bulls and briefs, all of which prove that the horrors of the Inquisition are ultimately due, not to ill-will or even to the desire for power, but to error, which had assumed the shape of a deep-seated religious conviction.

Among the Protestants, the Calvinists come nearest in zeal to the Roman Catholic inquisitors. In Geneva, Switzerland, the home of Calvin, five hundred persons were, within three months, executed for heresy and witchcraft. The protocols of the city in the year 1545 declare that the labor of torture and execution exceeded the strength of the hangman; and the complaint is made that, "whatever torture be applied, the malefactors still refuse to confess."

—Open Court.

THE TRINITY.

It seems likely that the dogma of the Trinity has held such sway in religious thought because it falls in with a definite stage in the evolution of the human mind. There are savages, it is known, who can count only to three. Many civilised people naturally class things in three divisions. The persons who see the affirmative and negative alone are behind those who see also a middle path between them.

Man's early intelligence discovered that it takes three lines to enclose a space. The triangle thus became the symbol of completeness, and hence of deity. The conception of time, too, as past, present, and future fell into a threefold category. In observing the moon as time-measurer, it was noticed that it had a waxing phase, a full one, and a waning one, and these three were one. In its waxing it was symbolised by the virile male, in its fullness by the female, and in its waning by the impubescent child. In Egypt, from which so much of Christianity comes, the

triads usually represent this natural division of father, mother, and offspring, as with Osiris, Isis, and Horus; and as in Hebrew the Holy Spirit, or Ruach, is feminine, it is possible that the Christian Father, Ghost, and Son were originally of a similar character. The rôle of the Holy Ghost in the Christian Trinity has always been of a rather nebulous character.

In India the triads assumed a more philosophical character as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. But, as the basis of religious worship is fear, Siva, the destroyer, has had more votaries than Vishnu, the preserver, or Brahma, the creator.

It is probable that the doctrine of the Trinity also served as a passage from Polytheism to Monotheism. It bridged the path for the Polytheist, and led him towards a conception of the unity of things.

Having said thus much for the belief, it should be added that, when the conception of unity is attained, the belief in the Trinity becomes either a Tritheistic survival of Polytheistic idolatry, or a mere jumble of words without meaning. The doctrine of a Son co-eternal with his Father, and a Ghost proceeding from Father to Son, yet co-eternal with both, takes the cake among all the absurdities of religion.

LUCIANUS.

ACID DROPS.

WHAT a century this is! Science and superstition rub shoulders together in every civilised country; indeed, the fanatics of new superstitions affect to be most excessively scientific in their arguments, illustrations, and language. Such are the Theosophists in England and America. And after the success of this charlatanism we need not be astonished at the enormous success of Mlle. Couédon at Paris—the lady who enjoys the special intimacy of the Angel Gabriel. Two thousand letters a day are delivered at this lady's door. All sorts and conditions of people send to her for "tips," and she consults Gabriel on these matters when he visits her.

The visit of Gabriel to Mary of Nazareth resulted in the birth of Jesus, and a Parisian journalist ventured to suggest that there might be danger in his intimacy with Mlle. Couédon. The journalist was prosecuted for libel, and the Court inflicted a small fine.

The cult of Joan of Arc, which has been promoted by French clericals as favorable to the cause of reaction, seems to have been responsible for many hysterical females, who proclaim, and really believe, that they hear the voices of angels. In most cases they are properly held to be subjects for medical treatment.

The Pope has been entertaining a number of Catholic sailors belonging to the English fleet. He gave them a good dinner with good drink, and strawberries and cream, and first-rate cigars; and of course the Jack Tars cheered the Pope (after the feed) to the very echo. Far more significant cheers, however, were heard elsewhere in Rome. A lot of other Jack Tars, who were seeing the sights, came to the great statue of Garibaldi, and they tossed their hats in the air and gave hearty cheers for the Liberator of Italy. Few of them, probably, knew that the noble Garibaldi was an Atheist. Had they known it, perhaps it would not have abated their enthusiasm.

Mr. R. A. Cruikshank, a trustee and manager of Kilmun Parish Church, has resigned his office and severed his connection with the Church of Scotland, on account of "the disgraceful treatment the Rev. Mr. Robinson has received from the Dunoon Presbytery and the General Assembly." It is difficult, however, to see how the Assembly could have acted otherwise. The Church of Scotland upholds certain doctrines, and, if ministers cannot preach them, how can they expect to eat the Church's bread?

The Bishop of Chichester is this month chaplain to the House of Lords, while his brother, Canon Basil Wilberforce, is chaplain to the House of Commons. The Wilberforces, like the Bickersteths and other leading Church families, have long been known for getting as many good berths as possible for their own kin.

The movement for Christian reunion at Shrewsbury has taken the shape of an Evangelical Free Church Council. An Evangelical was defined as designating those who accept the deity of Christ, with the object of excluding Unitarians from the happy family of Evangelical reunionists.

American missionaries in the Timpary districts have

forwarded to Freetown, Liberia, reports of shocking barbarities arising from the superstitions of natives. Some eleven cases of burning alive on the score of alleged witchcraft had taken place. The missionaries were using their utmost endeavors to prevent the continuance of such doings, though their own book has the injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," which sanctions these barbarities, and under which, it has been computed, nine million of women have been put to death in Christian Europe.

An alleged swindler, O. E. Miller, is in jail in Denver for wrecking the Commercial National Bank. He was prominent in religious circles, an officer of the Young Men's Christian Association, and a teacher of the young women's Bible class. At the time of his arrest, in Chicago, he was writing a speech for the Y.M.C.A. of that city. In jail he carries himself insolently, and says that earthly tribulations cannot disturb him, as he gets his happiness from above.

The *Daily News*, noticing a new experiment to get youths to Sunday-school, says: "The young are most susceptible to religious influences of any; but who would dream of seriously regarding the present Sunday-school system as a factor of any great importance in their lives? They go when they are little because their parents insist upon it; but no sooner do they begin to escape from parental control than they cease attending." This indicates how naturally youths take to religion. Indeed, it is found that some secular bribe—such as picnics, music, cricket, or gymnastic classes—has now to be introduced to obtain attendance at religious teaching.

The *Methodist Times* actually notices the published Debate on Theism and Atheism between Mr. W. T. Lee and Mr. G. W. Foote—probably because one of the debaters is a Christian. Brief as the notice is—extending to just ten lines—it contains some remarkable passages.

Here is the first: "We cannot say that either combatant pleases us quite. Certainly Mr. Foote does not." Could anything be more ridiculous? Did any two men in the world's history speak for an hour each and please a third person absolutely? Again, if Mr. Foote had "quite" pleased his Christian reviewer, would his speeches have been of any real service to Atheism? "Certainly not Mr. Foote" is too rich as it stands. It would only be spoiled by the finest criticism.

Now for number two. The reviewer admits that Mr. Foote is "a keen debater." Something had to be said to show he was not exactly a fool. Then follows the inevitable "but": "But when he comes to giving his objections to Theism, they are of a very hackneyed kind—objections which have been answered a hundred times." It does not occur to the reviewer that the Theistic arguments are at least as hackneyed as the Atheistic objections. Nor does he see that an objection stands until it is refuted. Nothing is more stupid than to say an argument or an objection is "hackneyed"—which is what Bentham called a question-begging epithet. Whether the argument or objection is valid is the only point at issue, and the only point worth a moment's consideration. A hoary falsehood does not become a truth by calling its adversary antiquated.

"Hackneyed"! What an ineffably absurd word in this connection! Theism has been discussed for at least three thousand years, and by this time it is impossible to raise a new argument or a new objection. All the most brilliant writer can do is to present the old points in a fresh and forcible manner. He may aspire to vividness, but not to invention. And it is in the light of this fact that a reviewer who knew the subject and his own business would pronounce a judgment.

Now for number three: "Mr. Lee makes some good points, but limits the scope of his argument unnecessarily." What on earth is the meaning of this oracular deliverance? Mr. Lee's argument was intended to prove the existence of an infinite God, of infinite power, wisdom, justice, and benevolence. How much farther could he carry it?

Now for number four: "His [Mr. Lee's] courage and ability, however, are great." What does "however" refer to? Is it natural to suppose that a man who "makes some good points" is *unlikely* to possess "ability"? Then again, we should like to know where the "courage" comes in. That Mr. Lee possesses courage as well as great ability we are very far from disputing, but he was not much in need of it in this particular debate. Three out of every four persons in the audience were on his side—a fact to which the chairman drew attention. Any "courage" in the encounter had to be displayed by the Atheist, who pleaded his case before a mainly hostile assembly.

Compare this sort of critical trash with what Mr. Watts wrote about the Debate in the *Freethinker*, and Mr. Putnam

in the New York *Truthseeker*, and see how the Atheists are superior to the Christian in sagacity and generosity.

Dr. Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *British Weekly*, joins Dr. Parker in advocating secular education, and writes "A Reply to Mr. Price Hughes." The last gentleman replies with the same old bad logic, and the same old ostrich tactics in respect to facts. Mr. Hughes is so incredibly foolish as to imagine that Disestablishment will be brought about by the Nonconformists putting it before the electors as a religious question. The State is bound to obey Jesus Christ, yet Christians must see that a State Church is against the will of Jesus Christ. Such is Mr. Hughes's ridiculous new program, and it is enough to convulse the very gods, yea, the very devils, with laughter.

Mr. Hughes holds that Christian teaching is quite wrong in State churches, but entirely right in State schools. "Of course infidels may object," he says, "but they must take the consequences of living in a country which has accepted Christianity." This is precisely what the Pagans told the early Christians, and the successors of the early Christians have been howling about it ever since.

Personally, we would as soon trust the lives and liberties of Freethinkers to Cardinal Vaughan as to Mr. Price Hughes. The latter is quite capable of arguing in any way that suits his policy, he is a dreadfully self-righteous bigot, and the principles he is now advocating are just those which crowded dungeons and lit the fires of stakes in the good old days when this beautiful Christianity was supreme.

The practical Scot emerges in the following anecdote from Pollokshaws, the burgh where the queer folks come from. The fiscal, conducting a trifling court case, asked the prisoner if he had any witnesses. "None but Almighty God," said he. "Well, you can't cite him in this court," was the sharp reply, and the business was proceeded with.

The return of Hospital Sunday reminds us that the British public provides only £316,000 for its hospitals, while it spends £1,375,571 a year on foreign missions. It may be said that the public has not sufficient confidence in hospital management; but the mismanagement of missions has frequently been exposed, yet the deluded religious people continue to subscribe, under the belief that they thus make their salvation sure.

It appears from the Return with regard to Religious Instruction in the School Boards for England and Wales that eight Board schools anticipated the Church move by teaching the whole of the Church Catechism, in defiance of section 14 of the Education Act. They thought it a sufficient defence to say that the parents had not objected. This illustrates what the parsons are prepared to do when they have the opportunity.

"It's false; it's a lie"—such were the expressions that flew about at the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church Ministers at Belfast. I often wonder why we continue to call the ministers of the various 'religious' organisations 'reverend.' How do we know that they are 'reverend'? We do know—by reading the police reports—that many of them are criminals. And we are aware from that personal knowledge that many of these fellows are the meanest and most despicable of mankind. It is about time we gave up aiding them in their hypocrisy and imposition on the public by calling them 'reverend.'

After the above from *Reynolds's Newspaper* of last Sunday comes the *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago, the editor of which says: "An aged and learned friend, formerly a college professor and president, wrote us a few days ago: 'I beg my friends not to put Rev. before my name. I would as soon be called a horse-thief. The title is odious to me, as it seems synonymous with bigotry, superstition, hypocrisy, salacity, and lechery.' His is an extreme case, but he is not alone in his dislike of the craft."

The Benefices Bill has capsized for this session, and the sale of "the cure of souls" can go on as merrily as ever. The Church fancies itself so secure that it need not set its house in order. Time will show.

The adoption of the secular system of education in South Australia, which has been triumphantly endorsed by the direct voice of the electors, was due there, as elsewhere, to the wrangles of the contending sects. From this point of view the measure of our Government may be a blessing in disguise, since, whatever else it does, it is sure to increase the acerbity between church and chapel.

Athelstan Riley, writing in the *Church Times*, is very frank about the Education Bill. He says: "The Voluntary system is disappearing, and a State system is taking its place. Now we must look for another principle on which

to rest our demand for denominational teaching. We find it in clause 27." "If it be withdrawn," he says, "we could not accept, without the greatest risk, the clauses which further endow our schools from public sources, and extend to them further public control." No; what the clericals want, and Mr. Riley as good as says so, is public endowment, and to teach just what the clericals please without public control.

Peter Lombard tells in the *Church Times* (June 12) a story of two good Christians who were discussing the date of King Charles' Day, one insisting upon the 9th, and the other upon the 29th, of May. The former, unconvinced, closed the argument by saying, "Let us refer to the Bible; we shall find it there."

Cute old President Kruger told the South African deputation that he shaped his clement policy on the Bible. We shouldn't have thought it if he hadn't said so. Anyhow, we reproduce the comment of the *Westminster Gazette*: "Mr. Kruger relies on his Bible, and we are asked to contrast him in this respect with his opponents, the financiers. But we have noted at other times that devotion to the Bible is compatible with the very smartest finance. Names will readily occur of distinguished financiers who are as eminent in religious circles as in the region of finance."

They were having a special sermon at Leytonstone Congregational Church, and while it was on some burglars broke into the vestry and stole the minister's clothes, besides other articles of value. According to the teaching of Jesus Christ, the minister should advertise for the thieves and make them a present from his remaining wardrobe. It is more probable, however, that he will give them six months if he can.

The Rev. Dr. Gibson, vicar of Leeds, is reported as saying that at the rebuilding of Chichester Cathedral choir one of the workmen, who was a professed Atheist, had his eye constantly on one man, the venerable Dean Hook, whom he saw in his study at work morning and night. He felt there must be something in the faith of the Dean, and the result was that the Atheist became a Christian. As usual, there are no names and dates in authentication of the story, which, however, may be as true as Gospel.

The Rev. Robert Law, Wesleyan minister and superintendent of the Retford Circuit, was found in the River Idle under circumstances which indicate suicide. He left a note intimating the spot where his body might be found.

A circular of the "Thirteenth Annual Conference for the Study of Prophetic Scripture," to be held in the Conference Hall, Clapham-road, from June 23 to 25, has found its way to us. It tells the old yarn of the belated Jesus who said, "Behold, I come quickly." Tickets of admission to the Conference are 2s. 6d. Refreshments will be provided in Room No. 3. "It is hoped that none will apply for tickets for the Lord's Supper who are not living in fellowship with the Lord, and in separation from the world." Ten reverend sky-pilots sign this precious circular.

God, we are told in the veracious book of Genesis, made Adam and Eve coats of skin, and he afterwards made sartorial arrangements for the clothing of his priests. He has, it appears, not altogether retired from the business. The Rev. W. Huntingdon, S.S.—i.e., Sinner Saved—relates in his *Bank of Faith* that he prayed for a pair of new breeches, and at once received a pair exactly his fit.

We now read in the *Progressive Thinker* that the Rev. W. H. Moore, of the Methodist Church at Stevensville, Mich., says he prayed for a new suit of clothes, and next day received a nice Prince Albert suit from a friend in Dakota, which he believes was in answer to his prayer. The clothes must have been two to three days on the road when the petition was received at the throne of grace. The presumption is, God anticipated the prayer, and started the clothes on their journey in advance of it. It was kind of him to remember his servant so promptly.

The *P. T.* adds: "The Governor of North Carolina is reported to have said to the Governor of South Carolina: 'It is a good while between drinks.' There was a period of several thousand years between the replenishing of the widow's meal-tub and the supplying of this suit of clothes to a praying preacher, during which prayers have not brought food, nor clothes, nor arrested the raging elements. But it is a pleasure to know there is one person in the wide world who has gained a kindly hearing, for which reason the Doxology should be sung by every manly heart."

The *Christian Advocate* says Christianity is the only jubilant religion that the world has ever known. Well, in condemning the mass of mankind to everlasting torture, and proclaiming there is no salvation save in the name of

Jesus, it has rare cause to be jubilant. As a matter of fact, Pagan nature worship and Japanese Shintoism are of a far more joyous character than Christianity.

The Baptist *Standard*, of Chicago, referring to the discovery by Mr. Flinders Petrie of an inscription of Merenptah, declaring "the people of Ysiraal is spoiled; it hath no seed," says disingenuously it "gives us little help in fixing the date of the exodus." As a matter of fact, as "Chilperic" showed in our issue for May 17, the inscription is quite incompatible with the date usually assigned for that event, and indicates that the Bible account of the people of Israel suppresses facts of the first importance.

In the *Expositor* for June, Professor W. M. Ramsay writes on "The Sixth Hour," and shows that the discrepancy between Mark and John, with regard to the time of the Crucifixion, cannot be got over by any pretence that different reckonings were employed. He says: "No modern scholar who investigates the subject apart from the passage in St. John finds any evidence to suggest such a view. All are clear that the hours were reckoned in one way alone."

If one witness to a murder said it took place at three o'clock, and another that it was at nine, we fancy the judge would discredit either one or both if the corpse could not be produced, but was alleged to have disappeared through the clouds. At any rate, he would never think of declaring that both of them were equally inspired by the Holy Ghost.

The successor of W. Quan Judge, Mrs. Kate Tingley, the President of the American Theosophical Society, Mr. Ernest T. Hargrove, and the secretary, Mr. Claude Falls Wright, with the bride whom he kept waiting eleven thousand years for him, are coming on a crusade to Europe to preach Theosophy to the backward old world, and enjoy a holiday. An interviewer from the New York *Sun* asked Mr. Hargrove: "If the mahatmas can influence whole nations by thinking one of these catapult thoughts, why not let them do the missionary work instead of your going all over Europe laboriously lecturing to people who don't understand you?" This was evidently regarded by the Theosophist as too frivolous a question to be answered. He looked at his watch, remembered an engagement, and dejectedly murmured: "You don't understand."

Here is a hint for Christians. Why should they spend worldly lucre on missions when they have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, who will surely convert the world as soon as ever they desire? No; the Theosophists and the Christians alike are really influenced by secular considerations, though they are not frank enough to say so.

The Rev. William E. Hinshaw, convicted of the murder of his wife at Belleville, Indiana, and sentenced to penal servitude for life in the penitentiary, preaches to his fellow-prisoners every Sunday. He is posing as a model Christian. "And of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Mr. A. B. Richmond points out in the *Progressive Thinker* that John Wesley believed in ghosts, spirits, and witches, belief in which he declared to be bound up with the Bible. "The truth is," says Mr. Richmond, "that the Spiritualists of to-day are more entitled to the name of the followers of John Wesley than the Methodists"; and further: "If John Wesley lived to-day, he would be a fearless advocate of Spiritualism, and doubtless would occupy our platforms regardless of the sneers and enmity of the great Church which has purloined his reputation for sanctity, and his great name, to propagate a doctrine he denounced in all his writings and sermons."

Brother C. C. Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, who is farmer as well as editor, and has lost by his hogs through hog cholera, says that the miracle of the Gardarean swine is the only one in the Bible that he fully believes. "Any man," he says, "who has ever had anything to do with hogs knows that the average hog to this day has a devil in him as big as a bull." Thus even the heathen have to testify to the blessed Gospel.

Referring to the Talmagian claim, that Jesus Christ shall be sovereign of America, the editor of the *Blue Grass Blade* thus gives his opinion of the Christian idol: "I have but little admiration for any man who never said a word against slavery or the liquor traffic or tobacco (that he should have anticipated), and who never spoke a word, or wrote a line, in favor of education or marriage, but who said much to discourage industry and to encourage tramps, and to put a man who never said a word against royalty or in favor of republicanism to be the 'sovereign' of this country would be as great a farce and mockery as we can easily conceive."

Hilderic Friend, writing on "Curiosities of the Church"

in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* for June, says (p. 426) speaking of the Swastika cross and Thor's hammer: "The sign of the hammer was employed in blessing, just as the cross was used by the Romanist—a point of special interest, as we shall often find the cross taking the place of the hammer."

There are said to be 335,000 non-kirk goers in Glasgow, where, in the good auld times, attendance at the kirk on Sabbath was an indispensable item of respectability. "Stands Scotland where it did?"

Talmage has been preaching on "America for God." He means America for the men of God, with the Bible as the supreme law—the priests, as its interpreters, everything, and the people nothing. America for God means a return to Sunday laws and blasphemous prosecutions, a step backwards toward the Dark Ages.

A traveller recently said that the States were ruled by the netticoats and the parsons, and it almost looks like it. In New York a man cannot offer wine to a friend who dines with him on Sunday; and in Philadelphia, under a law over a hundred years old, they can even stop the sale of milk on Sunday.

Some time ago, when the Pilgrim Fathers' business was raging in the United States, a Yankee humorist said it was perhaps a good thing that the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, but some people thought it would have been a better thing if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers.

We are reminded of this by the visit to England of a special committee representing the Congregational Churches of the United States. These gentlemen began their pleasant picnic at Plymouth, where the eating and drinking and sight-seeing were varied by an harangue from the Rev. Samuel Vincent, who made immense capital out of the fact that a Plymouth preacher, the Rev. Abraham Cheare, was imprisoned on Drake's Island in the reign of Charles II. Of course he indulged in the usual Nonconformist gush over the "Mayflower," and its "heroic band of emigrants." One would think, if he did not know better, that all the millions of people in the United States had descended from that shipload of minority bigots who fled from the majority bigots of their native land. It is well to remind gentlemen like the Rev. Samuel Vincent that the Nonconformist settlers in America had not an elementary notion of religious freedom. Puritans persecuted Churchmen and Catholics when they had the chance in England, and over in America they were the bloodiest persecutors of all who differed from them. It is enough to make one's blood boil, even now, to read how they tortured and murdered the mild and inoffensive Quakers, sparing neither age nor sex in the frenzy of their intolerance.

The *Christian Life* declares that in a parochial magazine lately a lady put an abstruse case of conscience. "Is it lawful," she asked, "to kiss unbaptised babies?" A clergyman, with some sense of humor, replied that, for his own part, it was his practice to kiss all clean babies without further inquiries. Another, with a fitting sense of the solemnity of the issue, replied that it was a conscientious principle with him not to kiss even his own babies until they were baptised!

At Pelican House, where sporting gents do congregate, they have the electrophone connected both with the opera-house and certain fashionable churches. You can take your sermon and your soda and brandy at the same time sitting in an armchair, and if the platitudes of Canon Barker are unsatisfactory, you can put him down and switch on a little of the gush of the Rev. W. J. Dawson, or the rhodomontade of H. P. Hughes. After this the Pelicans say there is no use going to church, as you can always tell inquirers the text. All that now is wanted is direct communication with heaven to dispense with the sky-pilots.

The Rev. John Vallancey, vicar of Rosliston, Burton-on-Trent, is a little God Almighty in his own parish. Anyone who wishes to visit the grave of a relation or friend must first obtain the written permission of his reverence. Recently a permit to Arthur Trimmings to visit and attend to his father's grave was withdrawn in two days, it being discovered that Mr. Trimmings had voted for the wrong man.

One newspaper gravely tells us that Dr. Tanner has become a Roman Catholic. Another newspaper corrects the announcement as premature. Dr. Tanner has not yet joined the Romish Church, but arrangements are being made for his reception. What a dearth of copy there must be when English newspapers fill up blank space with such information? How can it matter a straw to any sane man what particular religion has the benefit of Dr. Tanner's patronage?

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

July 5 and 12, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 21, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.; 28, (morning), North Brixton Gladstone Club; (evening), Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. July 12 and 19, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road.—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 Elfrabad, Brixton, London, S.W.
- A. J. M.—Quite true, but the "selfishness" which prompts a man to stand foremost in maintaining a great cause is not without its advantages to the world.
- LOUIS LEVINE (Charleston).—No London paper, so far as we are aware, gave a good report of Max Müller's lecture, in which he showed the priority of Buddhist maxims to the similar ones of Christianity. We hope the lecture will be published. More than once we have noticed fuller information of home events in American papers than in our own. Many thanks to you for the journals sent.
- B. H.—The confession of Kate Fox-Kane, that she with her sisters produced the spirit raps by cracking the joints of their toes, was published in the *New York Herald*—we believe in September, 1889. The Seybert Commission, which was appointed by the will of a wealthy spiritist, in 1888 issued a report to the effect that the manifestations were fraudulent. Kate Fox and Slade were among the mediums examined.
- J. SHARP.—Thanks. Imitation is the sincerest flattery. The world is wide. Let them do what they can.
- R. H. TRENAMAN.—Very much pleased to hear from you. It is like a voice from the tomb. We were under the impression that Captain Trenaman, who so loyally supported Charles Bradlaugh at Plymouth, had gone to America and died there. It is pleasant to know you are still in the land of the living.
- E. SMEDLEY.—We do not think that Nonconformist ministers have ever represented it as a "sin" to attend Church of England places of worship.
- W. THORP.—It is really amusing to hear these few discontented Socialists within the N.S.S. calling on the name of Charles Bradlaugh, as though he would sympathise with their open or veiled desire to turn the N.S.S. into a mere wing of the Socialist movement. Why, it was Charles Bradlaugh who said (as we think, hastily) that the English Socialists included a few poets and a few idiots.
- MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Collected at Mr. Watts's lectures (under the scheme) at Northampton, Sunday, June 14, £1 3s. 3d.
- S. W.—Thanks. See paragraph.
- FREE RELIGION.—We see no use in inserting your letter. It can not possibly appeal to our readers. Religious arguments for a future life are wasted on those who have discarded religion. An argument on natural grounds is a different matter.
- T. PARSONS.—Thanks for your account of the cabmen's missionary who went smelling for that apocryphal burnt Bible. Pleased to hear from so young a Freethinker.
- T. S. SAUNDERS.—The slaughter of the Matabele has been referred to several times already in the *Freethinker*. Perhaps you are not aware of this.
- TOILER (Glasgow).—Not without merit, but scarcely up to the mark for publication.
- ANTI-GRUMBLER.—(1) It is not true that the vast majority of the N.S.S. members are Socialists, and the statement that no Socialist is allowed to be a member of the Executive is perfectly silly. Mr. William Heaford is a Socialist, and we could mention others. The N.S.S. does not ask whether its members are Socialists or Individualists; the common bond is the Society's principles and objects. (2) It is not our intention to notice the scurrilous attacks of persons who dare not disclose their identity—although we know it well enough; and we can have very little respect for the intelligence of those who allow themselves to be influenced by irresponsible malignity. Every toiling horse in this weather is pestered with flies. He may give them a flick with his tail now and then, but if he stops to settle them he will never get to the end of his journey.
- G. DICKENSON.—Glad to hear the reorganised Battorsea Branch means business.
- LE DIABLE.—Thanks. To what fund is the £1 to be applied? See paragraph.
- G. DIXON.—We have passed on your letter to Mr. Fordor, who attends to such matters of business.
- C. T. BROOKS.—Pleased to hear you derive so much satisfaction from reading the *Freethinker*. The W. G. Cox, of Tottenham, who advertises his conversion to Christianity, is not personally known to us. He represents himself as having been "chairman of the Tottenham Branch" of the N.S.S. We do not believe, however, that the Branch ever had a chairman. In the 1895 Almanack the name of W. G. Cox figures as corresponding member. If this is the person who now advertises his conversion, we should say, on reading his announcement, that the Secular party is well rid of him. He accuses himself of swearing, ill temper, lying, and drunkenness. We did not know our Society had such a member, and now that we do know it we are glad to find that he has transferred his allegiance to a more accommodating system.

G. KERSLEY.—An announcement will be made later on. At present the Museum is well attended on Sunday afternoons.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—Thanks for cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Wellington Journal—Shrewsbury News—Daylight—Sunday Companion—Crescent—Freethought Ideal—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Echo—Burnley Advertiser—Dominion Review—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—Progressive Thinker—New York World—Raynolds's Newspaper—Weekly Times and Echo—Glasgow Herald—Der Arme Teufel—De Dageraad—Freidenker—Für Unsere Jugend—Blue Grass Blade.

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.

SUNDAY'S tropical weather was very unfavorable to indoor meetings, yet a capital audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Thomas Hardy's Novels, and Why the Bishop of Wakefield Burns Them." A good number of strangers were present, and the hall was brightened by the presence of many ladies in summer costume. Mr. Foote's lecture was followed with profound attention, and frequently applauded. The chair was taken by Mr. William Heaford, who had spoken twice in the open air, and was more inclined to listen than to speak again.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at the Athenæum Hall this evening (June 21), his subject being "Dangers Ahead." We understand that this is quite a new lecture, and we hope there will be a large attendance. Mr. Watts lectures there again on June 28, and Mr. C. Cohen on July 5.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured twice in Exeter-road Hall, Northampton, under Mr. Foote's scheme, to good and appreciative audiences. Friends were present from Wolverton and other surrounding districts. Mr. Watts received many pressing invitations to visit Northampton again as soon as possible.

"American Freethinkers," says the *New York Truthseeker*, "who have been disturbed by the reports regarding the Hall of Science in London, where the great Bradlaugh held forth, will recover their equanimity on reading the article from the *Freethinker* by G. W. Foote, which we reproduce. All previous information on the subject has been from religious sources, and, as usual when such is the case, the greater part of it is untrue."

Our New York contemporary also reproduces, with perfect good humor, under the heading of "Rebuked Again," our paragraphs on George Macdonald's "pitch into" George Meredith. It is really magnanimous on the part of George Macdonald to make our answer accessible in this way to the American public.

The adjourned Conference on the Education Bill, convened by the London Trades Council, took place on Friday evening, June 12, in the large hall of the Club and Institute Union. A considerable number of advanced political and social organisations in the metropolis were represented. Some of the resolutions carried were rather declarations of ultimate working-class desire than of immediate practical importance. Advanced opinion in London sadly wants organising, with a view to achieving something definite in the field of legislation, and this cannot be done without some sort of leadership and discipline. Anarchic and guerilla warfare never made much impression on a well-organised army like the forces of ecclesiasticism and privilege. However, some of the resolutions carried at the Conference are significant. Mr. Foote, on behalf of the National Secular Society, moved a strong, terse resolution in favor of secular education, which was seconded by Mr. Charles Watts; and this resolution was, after all, the only one that met with instantaneous and unanimous support. It was carried with great enthusiasm. Mr. Foote's observation, that the introduction of religion in the public schools was the real cause of all the

obstacles to the thorough improvement of National Education in the interest of the masses, was very warmly applauded.

During the last School Board elections in London it was asserted by Mr. John Burns that the working classes of the metropolis were in favor of the "Compromise" of 1870. Mr. Foote offered to address a *bona fide* meeting of the working classes with Mr. John Burns, and undertook to carry a resolution against him in favor of secular education. That offer is now repeated, and there can be little doubt as to the issue.

At the recent General Election in South Australia the clericals raised the question of religious education. The question, "Are you in favor of the introduction of scriptural instruction in State schools during school hours?" received 10,025 replies in the affirmative, and 18,978 in the negative. For a capitation grant to denominational schools for secular subjects but 6,791 persons voted, while 23,606 were against it. 29,432 voted for the continuance of the present secular system, and 9,260 against. As the clericals brought all their influence to bear, the result is very satisfactory.

M. Yves Guyot says in the *Westminster Review*: "To open museums on Sundays is such a matter of course in France that to find arguments for it would be like seeking reasons to justify the right of the citizen to labor on Monday."

In the same number of the *Westminster* Mr. E. G. Taylor has a careful article on "The Education Crisis," urging that the whole problem would be solved if only a purely secular education were given in schools, and if the religious side were strictly relegated to the churches and chapels.

The *New York Times* says that on Decoration Day (May 30) no soldier's tomb was more lavishly decorated than was the monument of Thomas Paine, that stands where his farm was at New Rochelle. An annual celebration is held there under the auspices of the Brooklyn Philosophical Society. Henry Bird, of Newark, N.J., presided. Among the speakers were Edwin C. Walker, of New York; Henry Rowley, President of the Brooklyn Philosophical Society; Captain George W. Loyd, of New Rochelle; Wilson Macdonald, of New York; D. T. Ames, of Elizabeth, N.J.; Mrs. Florence Johnson, of Milford, Mass.; and Dr. E. B. Foote, junr., of New York. Paine was lauded both as Freethinker and as patriot. Banners bearing quotations from his works hung in every available place, combined with garlands and flags. One banner, larger than the rest, bore the words, "Thomas Paine, Author of the American Revolution."

The skull, two teeth, and thigh-bone found by Dr. Dubois over a year ago in Java have now been certified, on the highest scientific authority, to be parts of either (a) the most ape-like of men, or (b) the most man-like of apes. In fact, this *Pithecanthropus erectus*, as its discoverer has named it, is perilously like our long-looked-for friend, the Missing Link. The creature is declared to be of the Pleiocene age, and to be of a form intermediate between man and the higher apes. The capacity of the skull is about two-thirds the average of that of man, while the thigh-bone is adapted for walking in an erect position—the latter being an important difference from the ordinary structure of the ape. We notice that it is stated—somewhat sadly—that "perhaps in some quarters the new-comer may be unwelcome." There always was an off-chance that the link would always continue to remain missing; but the *Pithecanthropus* certainly seems to connect very closely man and monkey.—*Westminster Gazette*.

An effort is being made by the Clerkenwell Branch of the Social Democratic Federation, in conjunction with the local Branch of the I. L. P., to secure the admission of the following advanced publications into the official list of the Clerkenwell Public Library:—*Clarion*, *Freethinker*, *Free Review*, *Justice*, and the *Labour Leader*. Secularists in the neighborhood should at once sign the necessary requisition forms, which are provided at the library. If sufficient signatures can be got, there is a good chance of success.

It is Race Sunday to-day (June 21) at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and crowds of people will assemble as usual on the Town Moor. The local N.S.S. Branch has secured the services of Mr. C. Cohen for the occasion. In the morning he will deliver an open-air lecture on the Quayside, and in the evening the Town Moor will be the scene of his missionary enterprise. We hope the local Freethinkers will rally in strong force around Mr. Cohen, whose platform should be thoroughly well supported.

The series of sketches by Uncle Benjamin of "Types of Religionists," begun in this number with "The Jesuit," will be continued in succeeding numbers with papers on "The Ritualist," "The Methodist," "The Baptist," "The Salva-

tionist," and even descending to "The Christian-Evidence Man."

In the *Dominion Review* for June (67 Adelaide-street, Toronto) Mr. J. S. Ellis has a good paper on "Professor Romanes' Return to Christianity." This, he contends, was neither so full nor settled as made out by Canon Gore. Romanes seems always to have had an unsettled mind, anxious and struggling to believe in despite of his reason. Captain R. C. Adams has a plain and thoughtful paper on the money question, entitled "Swapping." He holds that since the real value of the metals has dropped, instead of remonetising silver, the thing to do is to demonetise gold, and have a paper currency based on secured values, and managed so as to secure confidence at home and abroad. Dr. Woods Hutchinson writes on "Life Eternal," and B. F. Underwood tells "How John Hooker Became a D.D." This was by purchasing a slave who held that title.

Mr. James Neate informs us that he has called a special members' meeting of the Bethnal Green Branch to consider the open-air work in Victoria Park. Mr. Neate complains that he is not adequately supported by the local Secularists; even the "passive" members are far too passive in this matter. We hope the burden will not be left to one to bear in future. Victoria Park is a most important open-air station, and must be maintained. Local friends willing to help—above all financially—should communicate with Mr. Neate, at 385, Bethnal Green-road.

It is proposed to raise some suitable memorial of the late N. B. Billany, of Hull. We have received a preliminary circular from Mr. G. T. Hall, and shall be glad to make a definite announcement if we are favored with further information.

Mr. Joseph McCabe, for twelve years a priest, has left the Catholic Church, and is now lecturing as a Rationalist for the Ethical Society.

The Camberwell friends wish to arrange a debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. A. J. Waldron. Mr. Foote has not much faith in the value of a debate with Mr. Waldron, but he has placed himself at the disposal of the Branch. Mr. Foote will probably debate during the summer at Plymouth, Cardiff, and Swansea. Another debate with Mr. W. T. Lee will also be arranged for in London early in September.

There are many Freethinkers in Battersea, but the local N.S.S. Branch has not been very prosperous. The management of it fell into bad hands; it dwindled gradually, and, in spite of pecuniary assistance from Mr. Foote, it finally expired. The person most responsible for this state of things used to favor the Executive from time to time with large schemes of reform. He is now lecturing the National Secular Society and its President under an assumed name. Still, he is out of the way. He no longer blocks the road of progress with his large-minded incapacity, and the Battersea Branch is now reorganising. Three very successful out-door meetings have been addressed by Mr. C. Cohen and Mr. Shaw. The latter lectures again this evening (June 21) on "Christian Evidences." Mr. G. Dickenson is the new secretary, and the committee meet every Thursday at 8.30 at Mr. Martin's, 17 Pearson-street, Clapham Junction.

Absurdity of a Book Revelation.

There are many objections to a book as the medium of communication from God to man, with very few advantages in such a method, while there are other known means which would admirably serve the purpose of such a communication; and still it is conceivable that God might have used other and still more efficient means, which have not occurred to us, chiefly because we have had but little occasion to give the matter thought. An initial objection to a book, as the means of such an expression, is the fact that it is our judgment and our experience that, if men should attempt to impose upon us in this matter, they would use, and do use, books as the means of such imposition, simply because it seems to be the easiest, or the only, way in which a man would be liable, fraudulently, to attempt to make other men believe that God had communicated them. An objection to a book, then, as a means of such expression, would be our continued liability to suspicion of its being a fraud, and not the will of God.—*Charles C. Moore*, in "The Rational View."

Abu Rafe says he will be witness for the fact, but who will be witness for Abu Rafe?—*Gibbon*.

It is better to get rid of an old delusion than to discover a new truth.—*Ludwig Boerne*.

INGERSOLL ON THE CZAR.

BEFORE the news of the horrible immolation of victims at Moscow, Ingersoll had his say upon the coronation. His remarks, which his admirers in this country may like to see, were put by the *New York World* of May 31 in larger type than it uses for any of its own articles:—

"While reading the accounts of the coronation of the Czar, of the pageants, processions, and feasts, of the pomp and parade, of the barbaric splendor, of cloth of gold and glittering gems, I could not help thinking of the poor and melancholy peasants, of the toiling, half-fed millions, of the sad and ignorant multitudes who belong body and soul to this Czar.

"I thought of the backs that have been scarred by the knout, of the thousands in prisons for having dared to say a whispered word for freedom, of the great multitude who had been driven like cattle along the weary roads that lead to the hell of Siberia.

"The cannon at Moscow were not loud enough, nor the clang of the bells, nor the blare of the trumpets, to drown the groans of the captives.

"I thought of the fathers that had been torn from wives and children for the crime of speaking like men.

"And when the priests spoke of the Czar as the 'God-selected man,' the 'God-adorned man,' my blood grew warm.

"When I read of the coronation of the Czarina I thought of Siberia. I thought of girls working in the mines, hauling ore from the pits with chains about their waists; young girls, almost naked, at the mercy of brutal officials; young girls weeping and moaning their lives away because between their pure lips the word 'liberty' had burst into blossom.

"Yet law neglects, forgets them, and crowns the Czarina. The injustice, the agony and horror in this poor world are enough to make mankind insane.

"Ignorance and superstition crown impudence and tyranny. Millions of money squandered for the humiliation of man, to dishonor the people.

"Back of the coronation, back of all the ceremonies, back of all the hypocrisy, there is nothing but a lie.

"It is not true that God 'selected' this Czar to rule and rob a hundred millions of human beings.

"It is all an ignorant, barbaric, superstitious lie—a lie that pomp and pageant, and flaunting flags, and robed priests, and swinging censers cannot change to truth.

"Those who are not blinded by the glare and glitter at Moscow see millions of homes on which the shadows fall; see millions of weeping mothers, whose children have been stolen by the Czar; see thousands of villages without schools, millions of houses without books, millions and millions of men, women, and children in whose future there is no star, and whose only friend is death.

"The coronation is an insult to the nineteenth century.

"Long live the people of Russia!

"R. G. INGERSOLL."

JOY IN HEAVEN.

HEAVEN is populating at an unprecedented rate with murderers, if all whom priestly hands and prayers fit for that abode wing their way thither. Holmes, the multi-murderer, who went up on a rope from Philadelphia; Taylor, who murdered the Meeks family in Missouri; and Fields, the colored boy, who murdered Mrs. Randolph in this city, and was executed on the 15th inst., begging officers and witnesses to meet him in a better world, all had "made their peace with God," as did Nic Marzen, who was temporarily reprieved by executive interference. Of course, all these vile wretches, unworthy to live, mount to glory, and spend an eternity shouting praises to their Redeemer.

A very large majority of those who suffer on the gallows are Catholics. That Church seems to have a special affinity for cut-throats; but all the orthodox Churches contribute largely of their numbers to swell the heavenly host.

Mosheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (century 2, part 2, chap. 5, sec. 14), tells of the good Christian Father, Carpocrates, who flourished in the second century, that he "not only allowed his disciples full liberty to sin, but recommended to them a vicious course of life, as a matter both of obligation and necessity; asserting that eternal salvation was only attainable by those who had committed all sorts of crimes, and had daringly filled up the measure of iniquity."

Is not this position the logical outcome of Luke xv. 7, wherein Jesus told the Pharisees and scribes: "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance?"

—*Progressive Thinker*.

The more things are incredible, the more man imagines it meritorious to believe them.—*D'Holbach*.

TYPES OF RELIGIONISTS.

I.—THE JESUIT.

THE Jesuit, as I know him, in the person of the Rev. Aloysius Brand, S.J., is not one of those Macchiavellian beings of extraordinary intellect and no conscience, of whom we sometimes read as typical of the great secret society. Nor is he a hypocrite intent on serving his own political ends under the cloak of religion. On the contrary, he is a person of little intellect, though some culture, and of extraordinary conscience. He is deeply religious, and only cares for politics, or aught else, in so far as it may subserve the interests of what he holds to be religion. He prides himself not only on being a disciple of Ignatius Loyola, but a follower of Jesus Christ, and there is not an evasion, not an atrocity, ever perpetrated by his Church but he will defend it with the word or the works of his Divine Savior.

My Jesuit is a genuine believer. He could be an Inquisitor, but he could also be a martyr for his order and his Church. He enables us to understand both Torquemada and St. Simeon Stylites. He is an ascetic, dead to the things of the world, save so far as they may advance the interests of his order, and fully alive to them in this respect. He will consider the question of Home Rule, or of the divided skirt, equally with regard to its bearings on "the greater glory of God." He never thinks of questioning his faith, his Church, or his order, and he can find a deal to say for the *credo quia impossibile* of Tertullian.

The Jesuit is drilled to an expression of complacent composure. Nothing disturbs him. He is not of this world, or of this world only as a *point d'appui* to move towards another and a better one. But his gait is shuffling, and he cannot look you in the eyes. He never laughs, but has an inner snigger at the world's follies. He cannot walk straight. He cannot answer a direct question frankly. He knows the value of silence, and is not hasty in forming conclusions. He has sunk his individuality in his order, and feels great with its greatness. He believes himself a true disciple of Jesus, and one of the salt of the earth. He is part of the power behind the Pope, and he looks forward to the day when his order, which defied and survived Cromwell, Gustavus, Pascal, Pombal, Bismarck, and Bert, shall triumph and spread the name of Jesus and his company all over the world.

For this purpose he is ready, like St. Paul, to become all things to all men—and women, if haply he may save some, and does not think he will be judged as a sinner if the truth of God hath more abounded through his "Jesuitism." His personality is lost in that of his corporation. This is at once the secret of his weakness and of his strength. He is the logical religionist in that in everything he places God before man, and the interests of religion before everything else in the world. For what is there to be exchanged for the soul? If, then, you object to the unscrupulous laxity and versatility in the choice of means of his order, he is well assured that those means, whatever they are, are fully warranted to his superiors by the magnitude of the object they have in view. He has himself put aside, in accordance with the words of the captain of his salvation, father, mother, wife, child, houses, and lands, and taken up his cross to follow Jesus. Shall he, then, scruple if God commands equal, or even greater, sacrifices on the part of others?

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

Obituary.

MARK MILLS POMEROY, who died at Brooklyn on May 30, and whose body, in accordance with his will, has been cremated, was a well-known advanced American politician. He was editor of a paper entitled *Advanced Thought*, and which, although chiefly political, went in a Freethought direction, and merged with the *Twentieth Century*. He was a 33° Mason, and his cremation was attended with Masonic honors.

CHARLES ANDREW DENHOLME, aged forty-five, residing in Barnsley, has, for the last twelve months, been a member of our Branch. He was an unqualified medical practitioner, with an extensive practice. About 10 p.m., on the 10th inst., he was returning home from Hoyland, and, in passing a level-crossing near Barrow Colliery, he was knocked down by a passenger train and killed on the spot. This makes the fifth fatal accident that has taken place here. The "doctor," as everybody called him, will be much missed; for, as was said of Oliver Goldsmith, "he was more sinned against than sinning." People took advantage of his "disqualification," and, while accepting his skill, refused to pay, causing, of course, straightened circumstances. The Barnsley Branch respectfully murmurs: "Peace to his ashes."—W. DYSON.

Modern societies are advancing towards morality and, proportionately, receding from religion.—*Paul Bert*.

JERKED TO JESUS.

A MURDEROUS-LOOKING scoundrel on the scaffold stands elate,
Within a prison's dark and gloomy walls.
The prison bell, with mournful tones, proclaims the hour of
eight—

The bolt is drawn, and down the murd'rer falls.
But he has squared the "Savior," so with sure and certain
hope

Of everlasting bliss—the villain dies.
Yes, though his body 'neath the scaffold's dangling on a rope,
His "soul" is jerked to Jesus in the skies!

Now, ever since the break of morn, a motley, morbid mob
Of women, men, and kids have waited there;
And, when the clock strikes eight, they know the hangman's
done the job,
That the murderer is swinging in the air.
For then is hoisted up above a banner, colored black;
They scan the gloomy thing with eager eyes;
It tells them that the murd'rer from this earth has had the
sack,
And is jerked to gentle Jesus in the skies!

For he believed the Bible, and their blessed Savior said
Belief will wash black souls as white as snow;
And so they think he's "saved," whilst he, whose blood the
murd'rer shed,
Is doomed, through unbelief, to burn below.
To think that they believe such wretched rot makes sceptics
sick,
And fills all men of reason with surprise;
They wonder why the deuce the one is nabbed by ancient
"Nick,"
And the other jerked to Jesus in the skies!

Although the victim thought the Holy Bible food for mirth,
And said its God was anything but good;
Yet those who knew him say a better man ne'er walked the
earth,
That he helped his fellow creatures all he could.
The mists of sin and sorrow he endeavored to dispel,
And with the poor did always sympathise.
But, if the Christian creed is true, he's hurled headlong to
hell,
And his slayer's jerked to Jesus in the skies!

ESS JAY BEE.

The Dunkards.

A singular exodus is that of the Dunkards to the new lands opened for settlement in the Red River Valley of North Dakota. Fifteen hundred of these people passed through Chicago recently in special trains of passenger and freight cars, carrying the household possessions and farm implements of all along with the owners. They will form quite twenty colonies in the new country, and 2,500 more Dunkards at least are soon to follow them. They come from Dunkard communities in the Virginias, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, the last-named State supplying the larger number. They have not been driven by stress of circumstances from their old homes, but are simply seeking more generous holdings of land. The Dunkards are a simple people, generally of German origin, who are much attached to their Church, and observe the ordinance of feet-washing, and adhere to the Quaker principles of peace, non-resistance, and simplicity of dress. A Chicago *Tribune* reporter thus describes the people as they appeared to him: "The people, as a whole, seemed lacking in knowledge of men and affairs of the world. Even the elders are not in touch with the events of the day outside their own Church. They seem to move in, and be satisfied with, their own colonies, their churches, and themselves. Large families are the rule, and the women have a pinched, hardened look early in life."

Bible Additions.

Everyone knows that the italicised words in the Bible do not represent the original "as God wrote it with his own fingers." Most people, however, think that the words so given are put to supplement the little deficiencies of the Holy Ghost as to sense or grammar. This is so usually, but occasionally man has popped in something which entirely perverts the divine purpose. A well-known case in point is where Paul is made to say, All scripture is given by inspiration, where he merely says All inspired scripture. So when the Psalmist, in the true spirit of religion, says, "I hate thoughts," the translator modifies it into "I hate vain thoughts" (Psalm cxix. 113); and when Paul says, "That ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. iv. 6), his universal proposition is made into a particular one. A striking instance of a supplement is found in the Song of Songs, which is not Solomon's (v. 4).

AN EXPURGATED EDITION.

It appears the Christian sisters who want the Bible read in the schools have prepared an expurgated edition, wherein much objectionable inspired matter is dropped out of the holy record. Wonder if they omitted an account of the drink-offering of "the fourth part of a hin," mentioned in Numbers xxviii. 7, which was to be made day by day to the Lord? The command is unconditional: "The fourth part of a hin of strong wine" was to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering. A hin was a Hebrew measure of six quarts. One-fourth of this—three pints—was to be given the Lord each evening. With this fact in mind we turn to Jeremiah xiii. 13, 14, and read: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness; and I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the Lord: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them." If a man should make such awful threats, knowing he was drinking three pints of strong wine daily, a zealous effort would be made to induce him to sign a temperance pledge. The preachers will tell us this wine-bibbling and these terrible threats of producing drunkenness have a spiritual significance; but all these passages which represent God as a brutal character were reflections of the vileness of the writers, and it is simply shameful to impose them on the world as the "Word of God." Though emasculated in the interest of a higher civilisation, what remains will be inferior to modern thought.
—*Progressive Thinker.*

Guardian Angel's Narrow Escape.

Father O'Hagan made a pastoral call at the O'Rafferty mansion on Cherry Hill a few days ago. Mrs. O'Rafferty was in, and received the reverend gentleman very pleasantly. To his horror, he saw one of the little O'Raffertys playing at the head of the stairs with a razor in his hand.

"Merciful Moses!" ejaculated the startled priest, "if the little bye were to tumble down the stairs, he would cut himself in two entirely. How can you be so careless, Missus O'Rafferty?"

"Indade, Father, I'm not careless; I rely on the child's guardian angel. What else has the bye's guardian angel to do but to take care of the bye, and catch him before he gets to the bottom of the stairs, be jabbers, with the razor?"

"Ah, but, Missus O'Rafferty," responded Father O'Hagan, gravely, "ain't yez afraid of the guardian angel himself being cut with the razor in his efforts to save the child from falling? Who is there to purteck the guardian angel?"

"I niver thought of that," responded Mrs. O'Rafferty, and she removed the child from the razor and put it away in the bureau drawer.—*Texas Siftings.*

Chance.

One of the most common Christian objections brought against Freethinkers is that they believe in chance. A religious paper before us contains the following sentence: "What can be more foolish than to think that all the rare fabric of heaven and earth could have come by chance, when all the skill of art is not able to make an oyster?"

"What can be more foolish than to think that" anyone ever did say that "all this rare fabric of heaven and earth could have come by chance"? Materialists (whom, we suppose, are meant to be hit by the above fling) maintain that the universe is eternal, and that every effect has an adequate cause. The only "chance" results which we ever heard of are of the character of those mentioned in Genesis and Matthew, where we are given to understand that "in the beginning" the world was created out of nothing, and that a child having no natural father was born out of a virgin! Here are effects without adequate causes, or, we might perhaps say, operations of "chance," if that statement means anything.—*Boston Investigator.*

Worse Off than His Dog.

A newcomer from Norway was pulling weeds by the roadside in South Dacotah on Sunday, when a preacher drove up to him and said, "Good morning."

"How you do?" said the newcomer.

"Do you know, my friend," said the preacher, "that this is a day of rest and worship?"

"Ob, yes," said the newcomer; "Ay t'ink gud many time bot it; Ay was yust t'inking bot dat. Ay ged up in de morning, go in de feel, work lak hell. My dog he lay in de shade. Ay go und ged ma dinner. Ma dog he ged hees dinner doo. Ay go after dinner; work lak hell. My dog he lay in de shade. I go und ged ma supper. Ma dog he ged hees supper doo. One day ma dog he die; dat's all ov heem, and me got to go to hell yet."

BOOK CHAT.

THE last issue of the brown paper-covered publications of the Humanitarian League is by Joseph Collinson, and is entitled *What it Costs to be Vaccinated*. Such grave doubts now exist as to whether the possible cost of vaccination in ruined health does not outweigh any tangible benefit that its compulsory enforcement against dissentients is nothing less than an iniquity. Mr. Ernest Bell asks in the preface: "Is there any reason against allowing those who like vaccination to be vaccinated, those who like re-vaccination to be carefully 'protected' annually, and those who do not like either to be left alone? If any little casualties should happen in either party, they would be pleased to bear them for the sake of their principles, and the opposing party would, in either case, find consolation in the thought that there were a few foolish people less in the world." The case against vaccination is very well presented by Mr. Collinson, and those who wish to see what a strong case it is will do well to spend twopence on this little pamphlet.

This is how the late John Addington Symonds, the historian of *The Renaissance in Italy* and *The Predecessors of Shakespeare*, describes his religious evolution in his *Biography* (ii. 132): "Having rejected dogmatic Christianity in all its forms—Broad Church, Anglicanism, the Gospel of Comte, Hegel's superb identification of human thought with essential Being, etc.—I came to fraternise with Goethe, Cleanthes, Whitman, Bruno, and Darwin."

The *Windsor Magazine* for June has an article on "Socialist Leaders of To-day," with portraits of H. M. Hyndman, G. B. Shaw, William Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Webb, and others.

The *Echo*, noticing "Ian Maclaren's" book on J. C., entitled *The Mind of the Master*, says: "As we should expect from a novelist turned theologian, these discourses, notwithstanding their charming and popular style, are rather a kind of fiction based on manipulated facts than a solid contribution to Christology." Our trouble is that we find the most solid Christology but a kind of fiction. The facts are wanting, and all writers alike have to manipulate the old fictions. The *Echo* reviewer thinks that "Ian Maclaren" "unawares is dealing a deadly blow at dogma." This merely means that he substitutes indefinite nonsense for definite ditto.

In the story, entitled *A. D. 2345*, by George E. Boxall which is now appearing in the *Weekly Times and Echo*, the blonde races are supposed to have got rid of Christianity—the most artificial of all the great religions, and, consequently, the most opposed to the laws of nature." The only worship is that of the goddess Hygeia, explained as "strict attention to the laws of health."

There are two famous accounts of Coleridge—one in Carlyle's most saturnine vein of the old philosopher as he saw him at Highgate maundering on om-ject and sum-ject; the other by Wordsworth of his poet friend when "gamesome as a boy." Needless to say, we prefer the poetic Coleridge to the prosy one, and in the volume of selections by Stopford A. Brooke, entitled *The Golden Book of Coleridge*, we have the best of his poems, which in musical simplicity rival Shelley, and Wordsworth in meditation, while in quality of imagination they are unique. The book is a choice one, and will be valued by its possessors.

Mr. John Samson, who is a member of the N.S.S. Executive, has just published through Messrs. Simpkin a little shilling volume on *Inventions and their Commercial Development*, showing how to invent, what to invent, how to patent, and how to make money by inventions. We do not pretend to be able to judge the contents of this volume, but it appears to us to be carefully written as well as interesting, and we believe it will be valuable to the particular public for which it is intended. Advance copies have been submitted to some of the leading inventors, patent agents, engineers, and scientists of this country, some of whom have favored the author with flattering testimony as to its practical merit.

The Consolations of Christianity.

The Rev. Thomas Mirtle was not satisfied with the everlasting torture of the human body in hell-fire. He ends his discourses on the Beatitudes by the blissful suggestion that sinners may hereafter "experience a change which will render them more susceptible of pain and anguish than what can be now felt when the most delicate parts of the present texture are suffering from the most excruciating disorders or defects." What a lovely faith!

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. LEE ON THE SCIENTISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Quite recently I have read the published debate between yourself and Mr. Lee at Derby. Mr. Lee makes reference to a number of leading scientists, which references are nearly all incorrect. Darwin was an Agnostic, which he avows twice in his published letters, while his arguments against design are full and unanswerable. Huxley tells us that he invented the term "Agnostic" as being suitable to his own case. I cannot say what Mr. Herbert Spencer would call himself, but Lewes speaks of him as "one of the latest and most important Agnostics." Professor Tyndall says: "The order and energy of the universe I hold to be inherent, and not imposed, from without, the expression of fixed law, and not of arbitrary will, exercised by what Carlyle would call an Almighty Clockmaker." Clerk Maxwell tells us that "the formation of the molecule is an event not belonging to that order of nature under which we live," and he goes on to argue that it belongs to an epoch anterior to the beginning of the present system of the universe. Helmholtz and Ferrier seem to me to conflict with Mr. Lee's version of what they teach. S.

PROFANE JOKES.

An English clergyman was preaching in a country church in Scotland. He had as his subject "The Prodigal Son." "And the Prodigal Son went away from his old father, and remained in a far country for years and years. But after years and years he came back to his poor father, and his poor old father said unto his servants, 'Bring forth the fatted calf which has been kept for my son these years and years.'" An old farmer in the audience could contain himself no longer. "Yer a leear: it wud hae bin a coo," he exclaimed.

Parson (to youngster fishing on Sunday)—"Boy, I'm surprised to find you here." Youngster (innocently)—"Do you know some other place where they bite better?"

Napoleon having entered one of the cities of Italy, the churchwardens recommended to him the reliques of their church. "Sire, will you deign to take our apostles under your protection?" "Your apostles! are they of wood?" "No, sire." "Of what are they, then?" "Of silver, sire." "Of solid silver?" replied Napoleon, quickly. "Yes, I will help them to fulfil their mission. It has been ordained that they should go throughout the world, and they shall." Having said so, the Emperor sent the twelve apostles to the mint at Paris.

Pedlar—"Can I sell you a nice motto to hang on the wall? Here's one: 'God Bless our Home'" Houser—"Man alive, my wife has skipped with the coachman." Pedlar—"Oh! if that's the case, buy this one: 'There are Others.'"

"Did you ever see anything like this?" said a young lady to her escort at a church bazaar. "Only once when I was out West on a train when it was robbed."

A Scotch divine announced one Sabbath that in the following week he should go his pastoral round in Strath-bogie, "embracing all the servant girls in the district."

A ministerial convention composed of delegates from the various denominations of the Christian Church was held in New England, to determine, among other things, their attitude to Christian endeavor. A resident brother who always entertained the shepherds, having to be absent from home, left the following directions to his wife: "When the Presbyterian comes, show him to his room, and keep your eye on the servant girl. When the Baptist shows up, lock her in her room, and keep the key; but when the Methodist parson arrives, let the maid sleep at a neighbor's, lock your own door, and send for me."

My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven;
All creeds I view with toleration thorough,
And have a horror of regarding heaven
As anybody's rotten borough.

—Tom Hood, "Ode to Rae Wilson, Esq."

Side by side across the open Bible lie the sword and the fagot.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, according to conscience, above all other liberties.—*Milton.*

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.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Dangers Ahead."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, G. Standing will lecture.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, E. Pack, "Christian Evidences."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, J. McCabe (ex-Franciscan), "Rationalism and Ethics."
PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coyt, "Prayer."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Crumbling Creeds."
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack, "The Confidence Trick."
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. Heaford will lecture.
FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Branch: 11.15, R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?" 3.15, R. Rosetti, "The Russian Gods."
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Efficacy of Prayer"; 3.30, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?" Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.
CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. James, "Science v. Creeds."
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?"
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Where Angels Dwell."
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, R. Forder, "The Devil."
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Voltaire."
REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 3, a lecture.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Kowney will lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. Heaford will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BARNESLEY (Black-a-moor Head Hotel): 6.30, W. Dyson, "The History of Theism."
BLACKBURN: 7, Fortnightly meeting at 18 St. Peter-street.
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Millar, "Woman under the Bible and Christianity."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNESLEY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "Charles Bradlaugh."
CHATHAM (corner of Lines): Stanley Jones—11.15, "Jesus Christ"; 7, "The Christian Religion."
NEWCASTLE BRANCH (Town Moor): 7.30, C. Cohen will lecture. June 22 (Felling-square): 7, C. Cohen June 23 (Town Moor): 7, C. Cohen.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E—June 21, Newcastle-on-Tyne. 25, Hyde Park. 28, m., Clerkenwell-green; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford.

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

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The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others have also spoken of it in very high terms.

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D to F—Centre of Back to	F to G—Full Length of	Full Length
Elbow.....	Trousers	D—Round Chest over vest
D to G—Centre of Back to	H—Round Thigh	E—Round Waist over vest.....
Full Length of Sleeve	I—Round Knee	Please say if vest is to have
H—Round Chest, close to	J—Round Bottom	Collar or not
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