

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sentenced to Twelve Months' Imprisonment for Blasphemy.

Interim Editor, EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc., Fellow of University College, London.

William James Ramsey, as Proprietor, sentenced to Nine Months' Imprisonment; and Henry Arthur Kemp, as Printer and Publisher, sentenced to Three Months' Imprisonment:

Vol. IV.—No. 2.]

JANUARY 13, 1884.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

CHRISTIAN INCONSISTENCY.

THERE is nothing so downright funny to the unprejudiced mind as the tortuous wriggling indulged in by bible-believers to free themselves from the uncomfortable coils of discrepancy. Were a scientific book published and its contents proved to be incompatible with known facts what would be thought of the speaker or writer who attempted to reconcile glaring impossibilities with undisputed results? He would very properly be considered unworthy of credence and be treated accordingly. With Christianity the case seems to be entirely different. For years a system of electro-plating has been carried on to such an extent that we now look in vain for the pure, unadulterated damnation and salvation of a less enlightened age.

People, for instance, who now talk of witches, and reverently refer to the influences of the old ladies on broomsticks, are looked upon as deluded, superstitious individuals. That good old straightforward hell of fire and brimstone which the bible plainly promises, if it promises anything at all, is now converted into a comfortable retreat about which the bold bad atheist need not worry. "Times is a rushin' sure enough," Limber Tim says in "The Danites;" but there's a lot of "rushin'" to be done yet. Even in the nineteenth century Christians seem to be in the midst of an inexplicable haze. A Protestant turns up his little orthodox nose when he hears of pilgrimages to miracle-working localities, and he opines that there are no pools of Bethesda now. He ridicules transubstantiation yet believes that three times one are one. A thorough-bred Presbyterian believes that instrumental music is not acceptable to the cultivated ears of the lord, yet worships at high pressure in order that he may win a heavenly mansion where the "harpers harping with their harps" will make eternity as monotonous as possible. A conscientious Christian swallows the biblical account of creation and yet must be aware, if he ever received the most elementary education, that at best it is but a silly record of legends and old traditions which will not fit in with recognised facts. Does he reject Genesis accordingly? By no means. He veneers it with a scientific polish, calls a day an age, turns the account topsy-turvy so as to bring it within the pale of credibility, and after harmonising Genesis with science, has the unblushing impertinence to exclaim, "There, did we not tell you that the investigations of science only prove the accuracy of Moses?"

If Christians grant their moral support to the character of their deity as described in the Old Testament, they must indeed be a despicable crowd. It is no excuse for the virtual polygamy of Henry VIII. to say that he stood godfather to Protestantism; it does not remedy the character of Charles Peace to aver that he died repentant; and it is no apology for god's misrule to assert that he is improving. Be the dispensation new or old the character of an unchangeable deity remains the same. Would any Christian father crucify his only son to appease his own anger, which, by the way, is a curious attribute of a perfect deity? Would any man with a spark of humanity in his bosom be guilty of the terrible atrocities perpetrated by the diabolical instigator of the Old Testament? Their recapitulation would but sully these pages, and their recital could only induce repugnance in any well-regulated mind. Yet, forsooth, "god is love." I can find no affection, no strong liking, no regard, no

warm admiration, no sympathy, no fondness, no benevolence in the Hebrew deity whom Christians delight to honor. Ask those innocent Israelites who perished because their king took a census, what they think of god's love! Ask the wronged Hagar who wept over her child and prayed that she might not see her darling die! Ask the suffering Isaac as he lies on the altar while the glittering steel held by a father's hand points to his naked breast!

But Christians do not really believe that god is the ferocious immortal that the bible plainly describes. Why not, then, acknowledge the bible to be in error? Surely it would be more honest to confess once for all that the people who wrote the book were unenlightened scribblers who fashioned their god after their own hearts, never anticipating that succeeding generations would recoil in horror from what in a less civilised era were everyday attributes. But this is exactly what Christians will not do. They will patch and polish, and alter and retranslate, all the time asserting that god is an unchangeable being and the bible an inspired work.

WHYTE TIGHE

A STATE CHURCH.

HAVING long recognised the benefits accruing to the country at large, from the possession of a state church, and seeing at the same time the work of destruction the Liberation Society, aided by wicked Radicals, is attempting, I venture to send to the *Freethinker*, which circulates amongst Radicals and infidels, an article setting forth the benefits derived from a calm survey of the history of our dear English church, together with a few advantages which the system itself gives to us.

A country blessed with such an institution need not fear troubles without or struggles within; our army will always be victorious abroad (Majuba Hill to wit), and at home heresy will not dare to show its head. For have we not a specially trained and paid class, whose sole business is to pray? And amongst other things they pray for the blessings of peace; and when their prayers in that direction miscarry, they ask for victory on our cause—let it be good or bad. Once a year they pray that all "infidels and heretics may be brought home to the blessed fold, etc." It was once a matter of wonder to me where this fold was, but my mind has been set at rest on this point. It is in Holloway Gaol.

I am sorry to have to state, however, that, notwithstanding the devout prayers of these sincere men, such is the wickedness of this perverse generation, wars do occur occasionally, that we have a number of noisy Radicals clamoring for the county franchise, and that of the spread of heresy it may be said—

"Priests may cry and howl and lie,
But that goes on for ever."

All, I think, will agree with me when I state that the success of an undertaking depends greatly upon its founder. Anyone but a wicked Radical, bent upon the subversion of the state, will admit that the laying of the foundation-stone of a hospital by a royal duke, or the opening of an exhibition by a prince, will ensure the success of those institutions. Happy, then, is the church of England in having had such a founder as Henry VIII. of blessed memory.—R I P. Had he received his just deserts he

would have been canonised, and we should have had a blessed St. Harry, who, to say the least of it, was a man of weight.

Henry's wisdom and faith cannot be doubted; and that his coming was anticipated, I consider is proven conclusively by the typical resemblance between King David and himself. In the present ungodly age, when the faith of the masses is not kept up by rigorous church discipline and penances, sufficient attention is not given to the study of scriptural types. Take the following points of resemblance between Henry and David.

1. Both were kings, and the illegitimate progeny of both of them rose to distinction. 2. They both set about making a church. 3. They were both "fash'd wi," that "fleshy lust" of which Holy Willie complains, and, in common with that sincere Christian, appear to have borne that affliction with pious, not to say cheerful, resignation.

Henry was a representative of the Muscular School of Christians. This may be shown by the manner in which he treated women. He kept these afterthoughts of god's creation, these "ribs," as they may well be called, in their proper place in the scale of animal life. He acted like the internal intercostal muscles, and depressed the "ribs." (See Huxley's "Elementary Physiology, p. 88).*

But, although gifted in such an eminent degree, Henry was also a great sufferer. We have it, upon the authority of no less a person than St. Paul, that most men are troubled with a "thorn in the flesh." And, indeed, the whole of sacred history bears out the truth of his statement. Naaman was a leper, Moses wanted the "gift of the gab," and had a shockingly bad temper, Solomon was amorous, and Christ was given to abusing his opponents. Can it be that when all these failed in being perfect, Henry should be pure? He also was, like Naaman, troubled with a disease which caused him also to be an outcast from a certain class of society. I have carefully diagnosed this disease from data furnished by historians, and, as I do not find it mentioned in any medical work, I have called it "Cacoethes persecutendi." This disease appears to be still prevalent, though until lately it seemed to have disappeared, rendered harmless by a potent remedy called Reason. It appears in certain individuals with terrible results. It has been observed in a most virulent form in the following persons: Mary I., Torquemada, Sir Henry Tyler, Justice North, and the members of the Corporation of the City of London. Like many diseases, it is generally noticed when there is an epidemic, but it is always present in an endemic form, only needing favorable circumstances to break forth as an unmitigated pestilence.

When Henry fell asleep in Jesus, his mantle fell on other worthies, who have nobly striven to uphold a state church. I should take up too much space to give a complete list. I therefore content myself by enumerating a few, viz., Cranmer, Laud, Charles II., Dangerfield, Titus Oates and Mr. Newdegate.

By such as these has our church been established and supported. Its benefits to the country have been boundless. It eases the community of their surplus cash, which would otherwise be spent in sin, possibly in the spread of heresy.

The church has conferred its blessed and valuable patronage on various persons who may be thought antagonistic to its interests, but doubtless the church, with just discrimination, thought otherwise. Two notable instances are a tablet to Eleanor Gwynn's memory and money to Publican Booth.

In matters of legislation its bishops have always striven to keep the rabble in their proper place, and have opposed unanimously all reforms, acting upon the maxim, "Whom god loveth, he chasteneth." Therefore they have decreed in their godly wisdom that their erring children must not have everything they ask for, or they would become too free and happy on earth, and forget the church—the only true path to heaven. Their policy has been to oppose, as far as lay in their power, all progress, and so make this world as much like a hell as possible, in order to give men a foretaste of the wrath to come. C.

* I present this original and striking idea (which I have discovered after much labor), without fee, to the following. 1. The Christian Evidence Society. 2. The Examiners at South Kensington. 3. The Woman's Rights Association. 4. To all unbelievers.

ODE TO THE PEERS.

Honor the House of Peers
Long live the House of Peers,
Long live the Peers—
Whiggy or Tory-ous
(The) merrier the more of us,
Join in the chorus
Bravo the Peers!

Their latest lord a bard,
Verse by the mile or yard,
As here appears,
Will make melodious
Politics *ode*-ious,
Old ladies toady us—
Us of the Peers.

In the long days to be
Will we be merrily
Joyous until
Sometimes at duty's call
We, bishops, bard and all,
Minding our business, shall
Throw out a bill.

Then will our country bless,
And loyally confess,
Spite of the jeers
Of high-toned spouting flats,
Of snobs in Sunday hats,
Of low-born democrats.
Wise are the Peers!

Men born to rule or reign,
With godlike heart and brain,
By silly fears,
Must not despondent grow.
Let vile opponents go,
If needs, to Jericho.
Uphold the Peers!

Heaven's choicest gifts, and more,
Have we in godly store
Thro' countless years.
Shall then we change our laws
And give the people cause
To sing with heart and voice
Down with the Peers?

J. R. N.

WHAT DO WE OWE TO GOD?—IV.

Nay, do not shrink from looking fairly at the facts of nature lest their hideous and revolting character should convince you that these manifold forces, whose workings are incessantly reckless and destructive of all forms of life, are not controlled by an infinite power nor directed by infinite wisdom and goodness.

Nothing is gained by deceiving ourselves concerning the most obvious facts of life, for if self-deception is to be considered as first among the virtues, then the ignorant and incipient dolts of the past who had such exalted notions of their own wisdom with regard to celestial affairs while displaying deplorable ignorance concerning terrestrial things, should be for ever admired and esteemed as manifesting in their character that perfect abandonment of modesty and common-sense which alone fit one to become a perfect theologian, and therefore a perfect man.

But if childlike simplicity in overlooking all the glaring deformities in nature is so strikingly beneficial a characteristic, why not push such simplicity to its *ne plus ultra*, and regard the idiot as the greatest sage, and the greatest philosopher as the most consummate fool? Such a method of judging things would have at least some slight originality to sustain it. The lunatics might then have the world to themselves and establish enough religions to mutually destroy themselves. Jules Soury says all founders of religions have been insane, and doubtless he is right. All men of genius also manifest a slight disturbance of mental equilibrium; and so it depends on which side the balance loses its equipoise to determine whether a man shall be a theologian or a genius—a founder of a religious sect like Joseph Smith or a master in the realm of imagination like Charles Dickens.

But what has this to do with our indebtedness to god? A great deal. To everyone with a fine brain, capable of perceiving and judging accurately, there are a hundred with

weak, diseased brains, incapable of exact thinking and right judgment. Something must be wrong with the thousands of brains, for instance, that can construe three gods counted separately as making only one.

A healthy brain must be one well supplied with blood. Ill-fed persons cannot comply with this condition and therefore cannot think with that vigor and freedom which are requisite in a well-constituted organisation. Moreover, if a person suffers from disease of the liver or kidneys, this malady will change the complexion of his thoughts from a bright and cheerful aspect of things into one of unspeakable darkness and gloom.

If Cuvier, Newton, Shakspeare, Milton, and Napoleon I. were indebted to god for about 60oz. to each of brain, which carefully developed by cultivation enabled them to make their grand discoveries, produce their great works, or command immense armies—is poor John Smith alike indebted when his brain weighs but 30oz, which enables him to perform only such antics before high heaven that for his own sake it is considered wise to cage him as we do the wild beast?

And if the healthy, hardy man, who knows scarcely a day's illness during his life is indebted to god for his vigorous organisation, is the poor wretch with his liver perpetually out of order, or with a large cavity in one of his lungs, which causes him to be always irritable and often out of temper, is he equally indebted to deity for the possession of a body containing these diseased organs?

My theory is that to our parents is due all the praise for the possession by us of sound constitutions, and to them also belongs all the blame for bringing in the world children of diseased mind or body. In this way I shift the burden of responsibility from the shoulders of some unknown deity on to the more substantial ones of real men and women; and I affirm, moreover, that if our parents had been more prudent and wise in the propagation of their species, there would not have been so much disease, suffering, wickedness and crime as there is in the world to-day. Turning away from the theistic conception of deity as a being existing outside nature, we may now ask whether there are any reasonable grounds for supposing nature herself to be god—that is, a conscious being capable of experiencing pleasure at the homage of mankind.

Consciousness, so far as our knowledge enables us to judge, is an attribute of our organised existence only. We know of things in existence which apparently are not conscious, and if experience, which is our only guide, is of any value, we are led irresistibly to the conclusion that there cannot be an infinitely conscious being.

That we are indebted to nature for our existence, for all that we are, or ever can be, is true enough; but here we clearly mean by nature the totality of existence, and not an intelligent being, who produces all things, consciously knowing what they are, their capabilities and the effects they are sure to produce.

Man is a being of nature; he is one of her manifold forces; he is acted upon by extraneous forces and he in his turn acts upon them. But nature cares not for man—she mows him down with the same recklessness and disregard of his sufferings as she does all other forms of life. Her earthquakes, famines, hurricanes, and inundations still devastate the earth, consigning thousands to a cruel and premature death. Even in this advanced age hundreds perish from cold, thousands die from hunger; some die from thirst; while others are killed in terrible accidents, which nature herself is unconscious of and can do nothing to avert.

Man's only hope, therefore, is not in some outside power, of which he knows nothing and which in lieu of such knowledge it were absurd for him either to praise or blame; his only hope lies in his own power to improve his condition and in the compatibilities of the race.

"Yesterday," as Emerson says, "not a bird peeped; the world was barren, peaked and pining; to-day 'tis inconceivably populous; creation swarms and meliorates." Yet what immense strides man has made. To-day we have the compass, the printing-press, the barometer, the telescope, steam, telegraphy, electricity, and by the aid of these the earth has been transformed from a desolate wilderness to a comfortable dwelling-place. And our progress will go on. By taking the forces of nature into partnership we get complete mastery over all things on the earth, and all forces affecting it, and march on to noble and still nobler achieve-

ments. And let it be understood that not in isolated, but in combined action, humanity is permanently benefited.

The truly great among men are the workers, not the idlers. As Lara well says—

"The glory of a noble mind
Is not to stand apart from all its kind
In lonely grandeur. He is only great
Who helps his brother to mend his fate:
Whose generous hand is stretched to give relief,
Whose genial heart can feel another's grief."

And this greatness is within the reach of all earnest children of humanity.
ARTHUR B. MOSS.

KINNS, THE IMPOSTOR.

POSSIBLY when some of our readers saw that in the issue of last week I had spoken of Samuel Kinns as a pretentious impostor they thought I was rather hard. The events of the past week have shown that the phrase was justly used. I had intended to write an article myself on the subject. But I feel that nothing I could say would be more to the point than the following article from the *Western Morning News*. After the article the two letters of Dr. Woodward and Mr. Carruthers are printed as they appeared in the *Times*.

"Dr. Kinns, the public lecturer, who goes about reconciling science and the bible by garbling the bible and misrepresenting science, gets his deserts at last. I have ventured more than once to tell the truth about his most unhappy enterprise, which makes religious men who know anything of science grieve, and scientific men who know anything of the bible laugh. But Dr. Samuel Kinns has got much social consideration as the consequence of his enterprise; he is now asking to be endowed as a lecturer; and bishops who ought to know better, and who would know better had they time to look into his absurd book, have taken up his arrogant claims. Happily for the public he has overstepped the mark. He boasted at Canterbury this week that his scientific accuracy was vouched for by the staffs of the Royal Observatory, the Geological Survey, and the British Museum. From the British Museum, where the self-puffing Samuel is very well known, come to-day strong protests. Dr. Woodward, the keeper of the Department of Geology, denies that he or his colleagues are responsible for the fallacies of Dr. Kinns, regrets that good and excellent men should have accepted him as a scientific authority or given credence to his geological claims, and laughs at the notion that he is a light in science. Mr. William Carruthers, a fellow of the Royal Society, and the keeper of the Department of Botany, is more precise. He has sometimes pointed out Samuel's errors, but never testified to his accuracy. Sensible of the injury done to religion by ignorant advocates, he begs the good people who are lending their names to Dr. Kinns not to countenance one who can only bring discredit on the cause they have at heart. The Geological Society, he states, has refused to admit him to its fellowship; and though he writes himself F.R.A.S., he is the only one to exhibit such crass ignorance. He does equal violence to geology and to Genesis. He mangles the Mosaic record, and he does not know the facts of science. 'Whoever countenances Dr. Kinns,' says Mr. Carruthers, 'is doing a serious injury to religion.' Twelve months ago I said the same thing, but this scientific ignoramus has been making his way. One meets him in high society. One hears titled ladies in raptures at his proof that the first chapter of Genesis is absolutely correct. He is in process of getting an endowment for the remainder of his life for a work which has no merit, only demerit. Now that authority has spoken it is to be hoped that a term has been put to the career of the scientific humbug."

"Dear Sir,—On my own behalf and on that of the staff of the Geological Department, I beg leave to protest against the statements made by Dr. Kinns in the *Times* of to-day in the report of his lecture at Canterbury on the 3rd instant. He is there reported to have said that the accuracy of his facts has been submitted to the test of the authorities of the British Museum. I most emphatically deny that any of Dr. Kinns's statements have been submitted for verification to myself or my colleagues. I must add that I deeply regret to find so many excellent men have been induced to accept Dr. Kinns upon his own representations as a scientific authority and to give credence to his personal estimate of himself as a geologist. Every careful reader of his book, entitled '*Mosses and Geology*,' is sufficiently guarded against the claim set up by its author to be regarded as a light in science.—Yours obediently,

"HENRY WOODWARD, LL.D., F.R.S., F.G.S., V.P.
Pal. Soc., Keeper of the Department of
Geology, British Museum."

"January 5."

"Sir,—In your report of a lecture delivered by Dr. Kinns at Canterbury, it is stated that some men on the staff of the British Museum had testified to the accuracy of his facts. Would you allow me to say that Dr. Kinns has frequently visited the Department of Botany, and consulted myself and my colleagues, and that, while we have pointed out some of his errors, we have never testified to the accuracy of any of his facts?"

"Fully sensible of the importance of showing that the bible, which meets to the full all the higher needs of man, is not set aside by anything which the most advanced science has established, I am equally sensible of the immense injury done to both science and religion by ignorant advocates who are unfit to represent either subject. Of my own knowledge, I can testify that scientific men have been driven into an attitude hostile to religion by the work of such sciolists.

"Dr. Kinns's lecture was on 'The Order of the Geological Strata.' Geologists have rejected his claim to represent them. Quite recently the Geological Society refused him admission into their Fellowship, and rightly—not because they are opposed to such work as the Dean of Canterbury and others desire to promote; for no one who knows the councillors of the society, or remembers that its secretary and its treasurer are clergymen of the Church of England, would venture to make such a suggestion; but on account of the pseudo-scientific views he holds and has recently published in his 'Moses and Geology.' In this work signal violence is done to the narrative in Genesis and to the facts of geology. The order of the fifteen creative events which formed the subject of his Canterbury lecture is neither that of science nor of Genesis. He mangles the Mosaic record, and he does not know the facts of science.

"He adds to his name 'F.R.A.S.' I cannot believe that the ignorance manifested in his book can be found in any Fellow of the Astronomical Society besides Samuel Kinns. Witness his account of the miracle of the sun standing still on Gibeon. He had seen that by refraction the sun is visible for several days in the frigid zone after it is even as much as a degree below the horizon; and not understanding this simple phenomenon, he ignorantly holds that by increased refraction the sun was seen over Gibeon for at least twelve hours after it had set. He is incapable of perceiving the absurdity of an image of the setting sun being visible by refraction in the west at the very time that the sun itself is rising in the east!

"I am prepared to show that his book abounds in errors, and that it betrays ignorance of the very rudiments of science. It is because I firmly hold that whoever countenances Dr. Kinns in his movement is doing a serious injury to religion, that I make this strong protest.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM CARRUTHERS, F.R.S., F.G.S., Keeper of the Department of Botany, British Museum."

"January 4."

EDWARD B. AVELING.

ACID DROPS.

A GHASTLY burial ceremony that is practised by the Mormons reveals the hold polygamy has on the superstition of their women. Every wife that is buried has a black cloth laid on her face, and the Mormon women are taught to believe that on the resurrection day, when the righteous are called into the joys of their lord, no hand but that of a husband can remove the cloth, and that unless the cloth is lifted by his hand she must remain in outer darkness for ever. A woman who believes that—and the Mormon women believe it—can't help behaving herself, no matter how many wives her husband takes. She has to keep on the right side of the only man who can take off that cloth.

THE Rev. C. Lloyd Engström, one of the paid secretaries of the Christian Evidence Society, has published a sermon on "Christianity and Evolution," in which he asserts evolution to be "not only consonant with, but positively demanded by, the statements of holy scripture." Are we not told that man was evolved from dust and woman from his spare rib? What could be more scientific? Everybody knows that it was by diligent study of holy scripture that Darwin evolved his magnificent generalisations.

IN an account of England's contribution to foreign missions, compiled by Canon Scott Robinson, that dignitary's boast that during one year, 1882-3, no less than £1,191,175 were subscribed. All this money, spent to give the heathen a better chance of damnation, presenting for their rejection the sublime doctrines of the sacrifice of a god born of a Jewess about 1,800 years ago! Meantime thousands in Christian England live in utter degradation and are dragged to crime by poverty. Surely Jesus would tell these boasting Pharisees they make clean the outside of the cup but their inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

THE *Truthseeker* (N.Y.) says: "Dr. J. Matthew Shea, who for years has been a materialising medium at Chicago, is alleged to have been exposed on a recent evening by three policemen and a reporter. Shea, it is claimed, was representing an Indian prince, and stepping from the cabinet, was seized and thrown to the floor. His exposers state that the false beard, wig, and white robe fell off and revealed the medium. He was locked up, charged with obtaining money under false pretences."

A COMMITTEE at Woodstock has committed itself to the statement that "the feeling is widely experienced that the personal qualities of the late Duke of Marlborough and the manner in which he fulfilled his high position are deservedly worthy of public recognition." The snobs should spell "personal" with a "u."

THE Commercial Travellers' Christian Association held a meeting lately under the significant presidency of *Rob Roy*. This is the meddlesome body to whom we are indebted for the nuisance of copies of the bible haunting our bedrooms in hotels.

'Tis said when Jesus lived on earth below
The doctors let him all his wisdom show;
But were he once again to earth enticed
Our Christian doctors would not look at Christ.

How these Christians love one another. Speaking of Mr. Mackonochie's deprivation of the living of St. Peter's, London Docks, the *Church Review* says: "The Church Association must feel that they are doubly armed. The bowl and the dagger. Starvation or imprisonment. These are now the patent evangelical weapons. These are the coats of the organised conspiracy of persecuting Protestant Puritanism." Needless to say that both high and low church, while reviling each other with persecution, unite in their endeavors to crush out their common enemy, Freethought.

THAT prophetic humbug, the Rev. M. Baxter, editor of the *Christian Herald* and *Signs of the Times*, and author of "Louis Napoleon the Destined Monarch of the World," has inaugurated the new year with a new prophecy of "the dissolution of the age." According to what he calls the year-day system of Daniel, this will come off 1862 years after Christ's official advent as the messiah, or about 1893-95. No Christian should lease a house now for a longer period than ten years.

No less than twelve policemen by night and seven by day are occupied in guarding Lambeth Palace, the seat of his grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, at a cost of £2,500 a year to the poor rate-payers of Lambeth. The Archbishop refuses to let the Lambeth waifs into Lambeth Green—which lies an unseen oasis amid a desert of "outcast London"—on the ground that it is private property. Should he not pay then for its special protection out of his £150,000 a year like any other private proprietor?

A FORMER Archdeacon of Calcutta has come forward in defence of the established church in India. He asks how religious ministrations are to be provided for the European people of India if the government ecclesiastical grant is withdrawn. The answer is obvious. Let the Europeans provide for themselves, and not tax the Hindus for a religion which is odious to them.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF HELL.—According to the common doctrine of hell as a physical locality, and the predestination of all men to it through the sin of Adam, birth is a universal gateway of perdition, the whole world one open course to damnation for all except the few elected to be saved through the blood of Christ. The orthodox scheme depicts the lineage of Adam as a dark river of perdition, choked with the souls of the damned, steadily pouring into hell ever since our human generation began. But in addition to the refutation of this terrible belief by its monstrous moral iniquity, science is now doubly refuting it by the proof of the existence of the human race on the earth for unnumbered centuries before the biblical date of Adam. So this fictitious gate of a fictitious hell is shut and abolished. With it vanishes the horrible picture of this world as floored with omnipresent trap-doors to the bottomless pit, and closed fatally round by a dead wall of doom, through which by one bloody orifice alone, the believers in the vicarious atonement could crawl up into heaven.—*William Rounseville Alger*, "Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," p. 713, 10th edition; New York, 1878.

THE Testimonial to Messrs. Foote and Ramsey will close shortly. Contributions should be sent to Mrs. Besant, 19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, and will be acknowledged in the *National Reformer*.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

Mr. Forder has resigned the position of manager of the Progressive Publishing Company into the hands of Mr. Ramsey, who has returned to business. All letters, orders for literature, advertisements, etc., should be addressed to W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

February 27, Hall of Science. March 2, Claremont Hall; 9, Milton Hall; 12, Hackney; 16, Manchester; 23, Plymouth. April 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 24, Hall of Science.

DR. E. B. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture on all Sundays in January at Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town Road. Jan. 13 (at 11.30), "The Darwinian Theory: its difficulties;" at 7.30, "An Evening with an Atheist Poet."

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.O. Literary communications to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, 13 Newman Street, Oxford Street, London, W.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly from the office, post-free to any part of Europe, America, Canada, and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

MR. W. J. RAMSEY'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 13, Walworth; 20, Bradford; 27, Claremont Hall.—Applications to J. T. Ramsey, 18 Pearson Street, Kingsland Road, E.

RECEIVED.—Henry J. Barrett, J. R. W., N. J. Baker, R. Anderson, Will Strang, Striker, W. Hopper.

THOMAS TONGLEY.—Charles Freeman was like Abraham in his faith and readiness to sacrifice his son; but no ram came out of the bushes to save his child.

A YOUNG AGNOSTIC.—Mr. Ramsey will get the yearly volume of the *Freethinker* bound for you for 3s. and upwards, according to style. You had better join the N. S. S. at Old Street.

H. SMART.—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," Exodus xxii, 18.

We have received a copy of Monroe's "Ironclad Ago" Indianapolis and shall be glad to exchange.

F. CLAYDON writes us an earnest letter in favor of National Sunday Science Schools, to which we may have occasion to refer again.

E. W. GRACCHUS, jun.—We have no room for your paper.

J. S.—We have not seen the paper sent.

A SECULARIST SOLDIER, Sunderland, can get the *Freethinker* at Huntley's, 157 High Street, West, and may meet with Secular friends at the meeting in Borough Road Lecture Hall every Sunday evening.

W. HEAFORD.—Your article not to hand.

G. GREENHAUGH.—It has been roughly estimated that that the cost of upholding Christianity amounts to about twenty-five millions annually. Read Mr. Foote's "Bible Romances."

INQUISITION.—If he becomes chargeable to the parish the overseers can make his father support him.

C. H. MARTIN.—Your letter came too late. Glad to insert anything of the same nature whenever you wish.

MR. KALSHOVER, of 19 Chancer Road, Acton, W., has *Freethinkers* from Nov. 5, 1882, to Nov. 8, 1883, for sale; half the proceeds to go to the Testimonial Fund.

W. CRISP, 36 Kenton Street, Brunswick Square, W.C., and W. Rider, 14 Wells Street, Oxford Street, are agents for this paper.

C. B. MANCHESTER.—The value of the living of St. Mary Magdalen, Ashton-on-Mersey, is £1,400 per annum.

R. B.—See Mr. Foote's "Blasphemy no Crime."

ROSE GREENHILL.—Although Heine lived the latter part of his life in Paris, he was born at Dusseldorf on the Rhine.

J. BLESSOP.—Sir H. Tyler represents the borough of Harwich.

J. WILLIS.—Miss Becker, 29 Parliament Street, Westminster, will supply you with all information as to the Woman's Suffrage movement.

W. OGDEN.—There are bishops at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

G. HARRIS.—The Christmas Number is entirely out of print.

J. McDONALD, 4 Burton Street, Booth Street, Hulme, Manchester, who is going to Queensland on the 24th, wishes to dispose of a set of the *Freethinker*, complete to date with the exception of Nos. 2, 3 and 8, vol. I.

MR. WHEELER's review of Dr. Hunter's new pamphlet on the Blasphemy Laws is crowded out. It will appear next week.

It is particularly requested that all orders for literature should be sent to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, to whom all Post-office Orders should be made payable. Considerable delay and annoyance are caused by the disregard of this rule. In remitting stamps halfpenny ones are preferred.

AGENTS wanted in town and country to sell this paper and other Freethought literature.

THE HOME SECRETARY AGAIN.

As soon as I was at liberty I applied to the secretary to the Prison Commissioners for a special order to visit my prison companion, G. W. Foote, on business matters. I received in reply a letter asking me to state the nature of the business, so I again wrote complying with the request. After a long time I received a letter from the secretary, R. Anderson, Esq., telling me that the Home Secretary had interposed with his "instruction," and that acting on it the Commissioners must refuse my request.

I was not very much surprised. This discourtesy is consistent with Harcourt's conduct throughout the whole proceedings.

Next week I shall have something to say in reference to the action of more than one member of her Majesty's Government with regard to our imprisonment.

W. J. RAMSEY.

SUGAR PLUMS.

AMONG the London schools for science specially mentioned in a special article in the *Daily News* last week, the Hall of Science school finds a place.

THE Finsbury branch of the N. S. S. offer a lively programme at Claremont Hall on Sunday. In the morning Mr. Forder has "A Free-and-easy with the Devil," and in the evening Mrs. Besant lectures on "Noah and his Ark."

MR. C. C. CATTELL is about to start a "Society of Evolutionists" at Birmingham. Any parties interested are invited to attend a meeting to be held on Tuesday, Jan. 15, at 8 p.m., at the Holborn Assembly Rooms, High Street, Birmingham.

THE Legislature of Washington Territory, North of Oregon, has passed a bill for the enfranchisement of women, which having been ratified by the Governor has now become law.

HERBERT SPENCER contributes a pronounced article on the "Past and Present Position of Religion" to the *Nineteenth Century*. According to Mr. Spencer, the belief in ghosts, which arose from dreams of men known to be dead, was the beginning of the religious consciousness in man. "The other self supposed to have wandered in dreams is believed to have actually done and seen whatever was dreamed. This is the supernatural agent in its primitive form." Mr. Spencer throughout elucidates the steps by which ideas concerning the supernatural evolved themselves out of ideas concerning the natural. He does not scruple to apply his remarks on religious development to the god of the bible. He says "a deity who in early times is reported as hardening men's hearts so that they may commit punishable acts, and as employing a lying spirit to deceive them, comes to be mostly thought of as an embodiment of virtue far transcending the highest we can imagine."

ONE of the most remarkable admissions of the failure of Christianity which we have noticed of late, occurs in the *Pulpit Commentary*, edited by Archdeacon Farrar and the Rev. D. Thomas. The latter says: "The fact is patent to all, that the cross has not to any great extent in Christendom produced its true effect. Though it has been in the world upwards of eighteen hundred years, not one-tenth of the human population know anything about it, and not one-hundredth of those who know something of it experience its true effect. Intellectually, socially, politically, it has confessedly done wonders for mankind, but morally how little! How little genuine holiness, disinterested philanthropy, self-sacrificing devotion to truth and god! How little Christliness of life! In all moral features England is well-nigh as hideous as heathendom. . . . What is called the Church has done it—that is, the assembly of men who profess to be its disciples, representatives, ministers and promoters. The Church has done it (1) by its theologies; in its name it has propounded dogmas that have clashed with reason and outraged conscience; (2) by its polity; it has sanctioned wars, promoted priestcraft, established hierarchies, which have fattened on the ignorance and poverty of the people; (3) by its spirit. The spirit of the Church, as a rule, is in direct antagonism to the spirit of the cross. The spirit of the cross is self-sacrificing love; the spirit of the conventional Church has been, to a great extent, that of selfishness, greed, ambition, and oppression. Misrepresentation of Christ by the Church is the instrument that has made the cross of 'none effect.'"

MIRACLES: ESPECIALLY CHRIST'S.

HUME, in his excellent essay on Miracles, says: "There is not to be found in all history any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men of such unquestioned good sense, education and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted integrity as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind as to have a great deal to lose in case of being detected in any falsehood; and at the same time attesting facts performed in such a public manner, and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable: all of which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance in the testimony of men." This is simply the common sense of the whole question in a nutshell; and it is to be noted that even the believers in the old-world superstitions do not hesitate to apply this sensible test to the reports of all modern miracles; while the blindness born of their fanatic faith in their religious creed prevents them from seeing that it applies no less justly to the miracles of olden time. The pretended miracles at Lourdes, at Knock in Ireland, and elsewhere, were attested by respectable and respected witnesses; but do Protestants think of believing them? And yet they pretend to believe in the reports of miracles which occurred more than 1800 years ago, in a dark and ignorant age, and amongst a semi-barbarous people!

Again, the so-called miracles of modern spiritualism, which are attested by hundreds of respectable witnesses to-day, are laughed at by most Christians, who yet profess to believe in the far greater absurdities narrated in the gospels! Whenever I hear a person laughing at the claims of modern spiritualism I always make a point of asking whether he believes in the miracles related in the gospels. I generally get the indignant answer, "Of course I do; why do you ask?" To which I reply, "Only because the evidence for the truth of the miracles reported in the gospels is not half so good as that for the spiritualistic phenomena at which you have been so ready to laugh."

I once pointed this out to a clergyman who had been ridiculing the spiritualists, when he replied: "Ah, but I don't believe in modern miracles, because we know the age of miracles is past!" Now how do we know this? If we know now that there never occurs such a thing as a miracle, it is because we know such a thing never has occurred, and not that they did once occur and have now ceased to occur. If a miracle was ever possible or credible, why should it be impossible and incredible to-day? And if we know miracles to be impossible and incredible to-day, what valid reason can we have for believing them possible and credible in past ages? Why are miracles impossible to-day? Because the people of to-day are too enlightened to be successfully imposed upon! Even Publican Booth would hesitate before he asked a Salvationist soldier to swallow a miracle now-a-days!

A little girl was drilled to throw about the things in a kitchen the other day, and straightway it was asserted that the spirits were at work. What was done? Did we accept the reports and record them in a bible? No! we sent down detectives, and the fraud was laid bare.

Why were miracles possible in past ages? Because the ignorant and superstitious peoples of those times could be easily imposed upon! Every religion has had its pretended miracles, and the miracles of one religion are just as well substantiated as those of any other.

Christians are apt to talk as if Christ was the only founder of a religion who worked miracles. But Buddha and Mahomet are credited with miracles just as wonderful and just as well attested as those ascribed to Christ. Christians claim a monopoly of miracle-working power for Christ, as Buddhists do for Buddha. And Christians and Buddhists all cry out with equal assurance that they alone have the real, original miracle-worker.

And what beautiful examples of the miraculous art are those ascribed in the four gospels to Jesus Christ! The first one we find related of him is the turning of water into wine at the marriage-feast at Cana in Galilee. There was not sufficient champagne to go round, so the lord very obligingly conjures up some more. Then we are told he fed 5,000 people with five loaves. Dr. Lynn's inexhaustible-bottic trick is a variation of this. But the most absurd miracle related of him is that of the figtree withering away at word of command. We are told it was

not the season for figs, so the figtree very naturally had not got any figs upon it; and yet Christ is said to have cursed the fig-tree. I have often thought that this incident is strong proof that Christ was insane. Can we imagine a rational man cursing his figtree because it does not bear fruit out of season?

Of course, Christ floated in the air, promenaded the sea, became invisible at will, etc.—all in the "Arabian Nights" style! Then he cast out any amount of devils! We read wonderful accounts of Christ as a raiser of the dead. The way he brought Lazarus to life again was so wonderful that three out of the four evangelists don't think it worth while to say anything at all about it! But they need hardly have stuck at the raising of Lazarus, as they all relate that Jesus brought himself back to life again after his crucifixion. And it is to be noted that although we are assured that it was no ghost of Christ, but Christ himself in real flesh and blood, yet we are told in the same breath that he slipped into rooms when the doors were locked, and vanished into thin air again at will! But enough of these childish absurdities! The conclusion all sane and sensible people must come to, is that while a miracle of any kind is impossible, from our knowledge of the laws of nature, and its testimony quite unworthy of credit, for the very good and sufficient reason mentioned by Hume, the miracles related of the founders of religions are the most absurd of all the alleged suspensions of natural laws. In old times the founders of a new religion could not hope to gain the allegiance of the vulgar, except by exciting their credulity with pretended miracles: and this is the reason that we find every religion pretending to a supernatural origin, basing its claims upon miracles.

CARINGTON FORSTER.

GOD'S WATER-WORKS.

THIS isn't blasphemy! It is an expression neither of an "irreverent agnosticism" nor of a "raucous atheism." It is the title of a chapter in a "Geographical Reader," intended for use in Public Elementary Schools, and specially compiled to suit the mental capacities of children from seven to nine years of age.

Let a vulgar Freethinker transcribe into familiar nineteenth-century phrase the archaic language of the bible, and the outraged susceptibilities of culture and Christianity are cicatrised only by the application of an emasculated version of mediæval barbarity.

Let a Christian clothe in the cant of popular religiosity scientific facts, dear to the Freethinker as are the legends of superstition to a Christian, and the results of his labors are deemed aliment suitable to the nutrition of youthful mentalities.

In the days of its power Christianity was a religion of force, spreading its gospel by fire and sword. In its decadence it is a religion of fraud, securing the dissemination of its teachings by duplicity and cunning. The spectacle of one Freethinker undergoing a term of imprisonment for daring to laugh at its exploded superstitions, and of another forcibly thrust from a position to which he had been called by the voice of thousands, are sufficiently clear indications of what Christianity would be capable were its power equal to its will. The craft by which it has made and is making the Public Elementary Schools into nurseries of its doctrines, is an evidence of the trickery and subterfuge which it will employ.

Not content with the definite religious instruction which the law allows to be given in state-aided and rate-supported schools, Christianity stealthily encroaches upon the time set apart for secular instruction by incorporating its teachings in the ordinary school text-books. Let no Freethinker imagine that by withdrawing his child from religious instruction he has secured him against its noxious influence. Christianity pursues him into the realms of history, geography, and science, and adroitly plants god in each.

We protest against this. In institutions avowedly Christian and religious, we have no wish to restrain the Christian aptitude for tracing the "hand of god in history," or for portraying the deity as an almighty prestidigitateur juggling with the elements.

But if we are to be annoyed and insulted by these Christian propensities, we shall feel bound seriously to consider the advisability of imitating France in erasing the very name of "god" from school text-books.

CHARON.

REVIEWS.

New Ideas. Part I., January 1961 for January 1884. E. W. ALLEN.

CURIOSITY hunters and others, desirous of learning something of comprehensionism and its opposite contractionism, may find some interest in this strange journal. The price, 6d. for only sixteen pages, would alone preclude us from recommending it to our general readers.

Romance of my Life. By EDITH SAVILLE. London: W. Stewart and Co., Holborn Viaduct Steps, E. C.

THE authoress of this little book is favorably known to some of our readers by a little pamphlet on "Christian Mythology," which we reviewed in these columns some time ago. The present little book is the story of the life and adventures of a waif. Miss Saville has yet something to learn of the art of story-telling, but with practice she will soon be able to supply a decided want—namely, stories for children free from the contaminating influence of superstition. The book is nicely illustrated and bound, and, as the entire proceeds of the sale are to be devoted to a fund to give a treat to the children of Freethinkers, we have great pleasure in recommending parents to invest 1s. 6d. in this book for the benefit of their children.

To-Day. Vol. I., No. 1., January, 1884. The Modern Press, 13 and 14 Paternoster Row.

THE editors, Messrs. Ernest Belfort Bax and James Leigh Joynes, declare in their preface, "We maintain that Socialism is the inevitable outgrowth of the ages, that it is the necessary result of the historical development which is producing it. Socialism will, therefore, supply the key-note of our magazine." This is certainly well borne out in the first number, which opens with a paper on "The Revolution of To-day," by H. M. Hyndman. Mr. Hyndman takes a wide survey of the social movement, and looks forward to the Centenary of the French Revolution of 1789 for a new and strenuous effort to conquer for the masses the control of the forces of civilisation. Then follows "The Three Seekers," a poem by William Morris, which lovers of poetry will esteem worth the price of the whole number. Dr. Aveling follows with a paper on "Christianity and Capitalism," which he terms "the two curses of our country and time." One of the most interesting items of this new magazine is a record of the international popular movement culled from all quarters by Miss Eleanor Marx, daughter of the author of "Das Kapital." C. Kegan Paul makes a rather weak plea for abstinence from intoxicants, and J. Boyd Kinnear deals ably with "The Doctrine of Diminishing Returns from Agriculture." The magazine throughout is extremely well written and printed, and if it maintains its present standard will certainly deserve success even if it does not command it.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

SUPERNATURALISM.—No sect as has yet boldly announced itself as entirely denying a supernatural origin for its religion. So dear to the human heart is the shroud of mystery, so fond are we of the magnifying qualities of fog, that few have quite dared to expose their religion to the clear and mistle-light of noontide. The Unitarians have approached this posture more nearly than other sects, I suppose, and yet even they have not cut entirely loose from supernaturalism. Still they attribute to Christianity a kind of quasi-supernatural origin; still they import from another world motives for conduct in this; still they hold fast to the most difficult miracles while rejecting the most easy. But the time is at hand when, if true to ourselves, we shall reason of religion on an entirely natural basis; when we shall no longer journey to ghostland to find incentives to righteousness; when we shall take ethical culture as the subject matter of our teaching, and experience as the Alpha and Omega of our motive.—*Ex-Rev. G. C. Miln*, "Last Words in the Pulpit," p. 34; Chicago, 1882.

MODERN CHRISTIANITY.—The system of drilling the mind into a docile acceptance of out-worn superstitions may produce results interesting to psychologists. That it can ever generate a body of doctrine worthy to be called a religion, will be believed by no one who has any faith in his race. You may train a clever man to abdicate his reason when he goes inside a church. You cannot form a stable creed which revolts every man of intellect who wishes to think systematically and honestly. And, therefore, it is needless to ask what would be the true name of such a faith, or whether such a hybrid form of opinion as a combination of a rational view of the universe for ordinary, with an irrational view for ecclesiastical purposes, would deserve to be called Christianity.—*Leslie Stephen*, "Essays on Freethinking and Plain-speaking," p. 152; 1873.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE RESURRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—At page 2 of the *Freethinker* for Jan. 6, 1884, allusion is made to the Jews hiring soldiers to guard the tomb. Only Matthew mentions guarding the tomb, and according to him Christ was crucified on the Friday and entombed the same evening. It was on the *morrow* (Matthew xxvii., 62), Saturday, that the guard was asked for; so the tomb was guarded only during Saturday night. Did the soldiers inspect the tomb before they commenced guarding it? because the body might have been removed during the Friday night.—
Yours truly,
M. M.

PROFANE JOKES.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER (to class of rustics): "Why did the shepherds watch their flocks by night?" Ah dunno, mum, wi'out it wor lammin' time."

"MOTHER, why are angels always little boys and never little girls?" The mother, after long reflexion—"To avoid scandals in paradise, my child."

"Yes," said the Vermont deacon, "I always go down to camp-meeting and always come back feeling good. Do you see that magnificent horse there in the field? Well, you ought to have seen the old plug I took down there."

A COUNTRY clergyman, who recently preached in an Austin church, is an admirer of the writings of Charles Dickens, and quotes from his novels almost as often as he does from the bible. He surprised his congregation by winding up a gorgeous peroration with: "It is thus, you see, my brethren, as the scriptures say, 'Barkis is willin,' but the flesh is weak."

"WHAT'S the worst thing about riches?" asked a Sunday-school teacher. "That they take unto themselves wings and fly away," promptly replied the boy at the foot of the class.

"FATHER," said a bright lad, "I think I'll become a minister when I grow up." "What puts that idea in your head, my boy?" asked the astonished parent. "Because, dad, I notice that ma always kills a chicken whenever the minister eats here."

"DOES your mind never dwell upon the awful certainty of death?" asked the clergyman of Hardup. "Well, not very numerously," responded he; "it's the awful uncertainty of how to get a living that troubles me."

AMONG the relics shown at a church in Mexico is a large, black opaque bottle. "Why," exclaimed a visitor, after examining it narrowly, "what do you show this for, it is empty?" "Empty," said the sacristian. "Not at all. It contains some of the darkness which Moses spread over the land of Egypt."

A TOWN missionary was one day visiting a sick man. After some unpractical talk the man asked for bread. "Ah, my friend, said the man of god, "man cannot live by bread alone." "No," gasped the man, "he's forced to have a few vegetables."

THE pastor of a baptist chapel somewhere in one of the Western States, got wrong with his people somehow. At length he got notice to quit, and the poor fellow knew not what to do for a living. The farewell Sunday came, and the chapel was crowded for a farewell sermon. The good man seemed in excellent spirits, however, and announced that he'd just received the appointment as chaplain to a gaol. Then he took his text, and read it with emphasis—"I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also."

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KILBURN BRANCH N. S. S., Kilburn Baths, Goldsmith Place: A two-night Debate will take place on January 13 and 20, 1884, between Mr. F. Mortimer and Mr. J. Tarry. Proposition, "That Christianity is better calculated to benefit mankind than Secularism." Open at 7, commence at 7.30.

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DOES any Freethinker know of an honest, sober, kindly
and energetic woman, not a Christian, who would be able to
help an elderly lady living alone at Shepherd's Bush? Domestic
service, a little nursing, kindness are required. The terms would
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