

THE FREETHINKER.

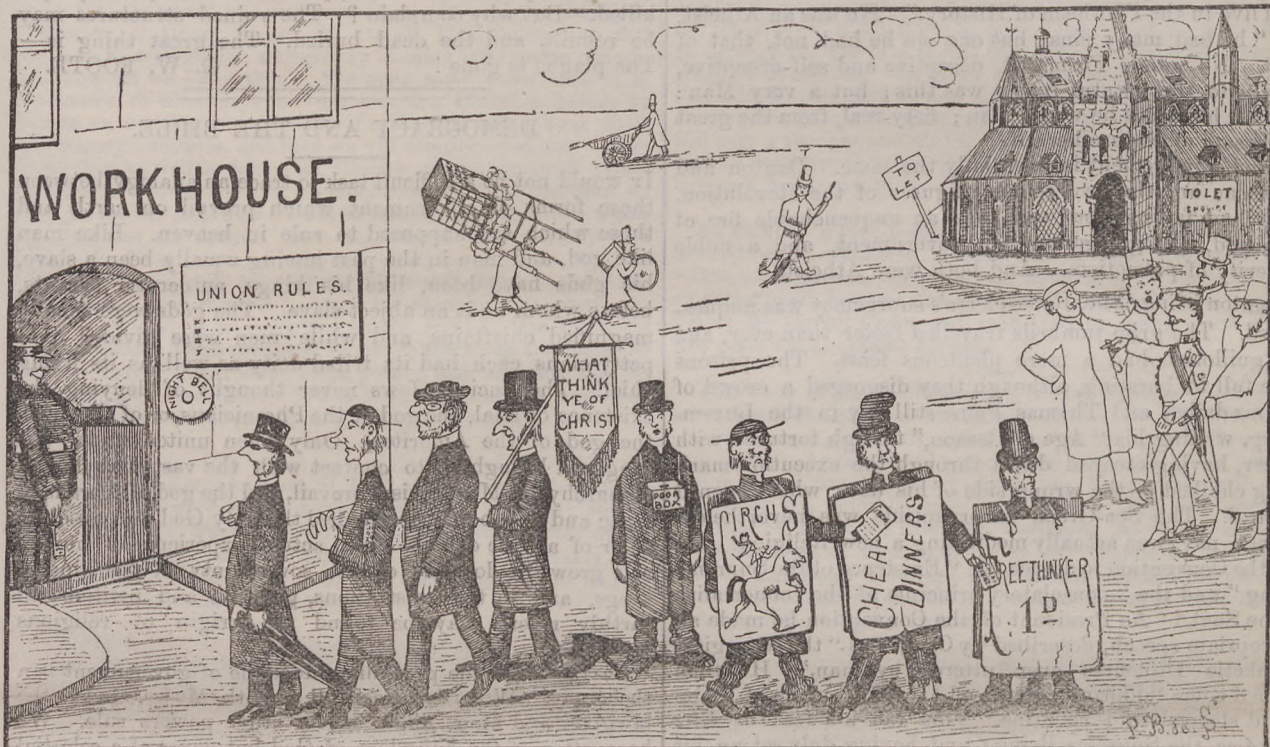
EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



PARSONS OUT OF WORK; OR, RESULTS OF FREETHOUGHT AND DISESTABLISHMENT.

"The meat-offering and the drink-offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests the Lord's ministers mourn."—JOEL i., 9.

ATHEISM IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

ACCORDING to promise, we shall devote this article to a criticism of the Rev. Dr. Hitchens' diatribes on Atheism in the French Revolution.

Very naturally, after the manner of his kind, Dr. Hitchens goes to the French Revolution for proof that Atheism is a "school of ferocity." "The brief reign of Atheism," he says, "was emphatically the reign of terror." He then gives a ludicrously exaggerated picture of the time—suicides by thousands, the guillotine going incessantly, and rivers of blood flowing through the streets. Now how many people does the reader think were guillotined during the Reign of Terror? Carlyle gives the number—"two thousand all but a few." Even the Abbé Montgaillard only claims four thousand. Ten times as many were murdered in one night in the Bartholomew Massacre, which was planned and executed by Christians in cold blood, with no such excuse as the Terrorists had in domestic intrigues with a foreign invader. Forty thousand assassinated by Christian champions at a given signal, and two thousand guillotined by the Terrorists when France was maddened by the insolent threats of her neighbors, and nothing but a very frenzy of patriotism could drive the monarchical vultures of Europe from their obscene repast! Yet orthodox preachers are never tired of denouncing the "bloody Revolution" and its "Atheistic monsters." Truly, as Carlyle remarks, "the head of man is a strange, vacant sounding-shell, and studies Cocker to small purpose."

Nor is it true that the Reign of Terror was the reign of Atheism. Its supreme personification was Robespierre, the Deist, who publicly proclaimed the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; while those who tried to arrest it, and lost their lives in the attempt, were chiefly Atheists, like Danton and Camille Desmoulins. Chaumette

and his Feast of Reason may be passed over as unessential. Mercier, who relates the mock worship of his Goddess of Reason at Notre-Dame, was, as Carlyle says, an "exaggerative man," and we need not attach too much importance to his acrid descriptions. At any rate, Chaumette's exploits were harmless enough. He was an Atheist, it is true, and had no objection to melting down church bells for bullets in time of national peril; but he is not specially responsible for the executions in Paris, and he was himself decapitated among the last batches of victims who fell under the "Sea-Green Incorruptible's" ravenous guillotine. Against Chaumette's vagaries we may set the fact that when the Revolutionary Army came with their carnagole and hectic addresses to the Convention, it was Danton who "gloomed considerably, in his place, demanding that there be prose and decency in future."

The Law of Suspect worked cruelly, as was inevitable. There was suspicion everywhere, each man seeing an enemy to the Republic in his neighbor. The prisons were full, the tribunals were busy, and the guillotine "went merrily." All this produced no relenting in deistic Robespierre, but the "great heart" of atheistic Danton was, as Carlyle says, "weary of it." He went to his native Arcis for a little peace, and "The great Titan walks silent, by the banks of the murmuring Aube, in young native haunts that knew him when a boy; wonders what the end of these things may be."

Returning, he found Camille Desmoulins purged out of the Convention for suggesting that among so many committees there should be a "Committee of Mercy." Danton agreed with his friend. "It is right," he said, "to repress the Royalists; but we should not strike except where it is useful to the Republic; we should not confound the innocent and the guilty." Whereupon Robespierre asked who told him that "one innocent person had perished." "What!" retorted Danton, "not one innocent?" And the

Sea-Green Incorruptible could only lour in reply. Not long after, Danton, Camille and other friends were arrested overnight, and taken to the Luxembourg, where Thomas Paine was then lying for the crime of being a foreigner and a hater of bloodshed. The prisoners crowded to see the giant of the Revolution enter among them. "Messieurs," said Danton politely, "I hoped soon to have got you all out of this: but here I am myself; and one sees not where it will end."

Danton's trial is too grand a chapter of French history to be summarised in a paragraph. With his death, it is incomparably described by Carlyle. "My name is Danton," he told the Committee, "a name tolerably known to the Revolution: my abode will soon be Annihilation; but I shall live in the Pantheon of History." He was an Atheist, and "he had many sins; but one sin he had not, that of Cant. No hollow Formalist, deceptive and self-deceptive, *ghastly* to the natural sense, was this; but a very Man: with all his dross he was a Man; fiery-real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself."

Taine's judgement is essentially the same. Danton and Mirabeau are the two colossal figures of the Revolution. Both had failings, but each had an unquenchable fire of manhood, a high genius for government, and a noble sincerity of patriotism. And both were Atheists.

Danton being gone, Robespierre's supremacy was unquestioned. The grim tumbrils travelled faster than ever, and the guillotine had a more plenteous feast. The prisons were full to bursting, although they disgorged a crowd of victims daily; and Thomas Paine still lay in the Luxembourg, writing his "Age of Reason," though tortured with cancer, having escaped death through the execution-mark being chalked on the wrong side of his door, which opened *outward*. The Sea-Green Incorruptible was nevertheless serene; nay, was actually meditating a new Religion. He got the Convention to decree the "Existence of the Supreme Being" and the "consolatory principle of the Immortality of the Soul." As President of the Convention he made an appropriate speech, described by Carlyle as "the scraggiest Prophetic Discourse ever uttered by man." He then burned some "hideous statues of Atheism," made of paste-board steeped in turpentine. "This was his feast of *Être Suprême*, the Supreme Being; and having duly set up his God, he went on preparing fresh lists of victims for the guillotine, until at last some, whose days he had already numbered, plucked up the courage of despair, arrested *him*, got *him* guillotined, and so ended Robespierre and the Reign of Terror together.

Our readers will now be able to see the full absurdity of Dr. Hitchens' argument. The executions during the whole Reign of Terror numbered two thousand as against forty thousand killed in one night in the Bartholomew Massacre, to say nothing of the millions of men, women and children tortured by Christianity from Constantine to Louis the Fifteenth. And so far from Atheism having exasperated the "ferocity" of the Revolution, it was rather a restraining force. Many of the most prominent Girondists, whose executions heralded the Terror, were Atheists. Their only crime was that they were too good for the situation. Mirabeau, the Titan of the early Revolution, was also an Atheist; and it was his genius and personality that kept the movement within rational bounds. Lastly, it was the Atheists, such as Danton and Desmoulins, who sought to stop the Reign of Terror, and Robespierre the Deist who frustrated their efforts by compassing their death. And when they were removed, not only did blood flow faster than ever, but "Mahomet-Robespierre" proceeded to burn statues of Atheism publicly, and to proclaim the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.

Dr. Hitchens should study the *causes* of the Revolution. It was the result of centuries of robbery and oppression of the people by the monarchy, the aristocracy and the priesthood. The day of reckoning came at last, and it was naturally stern. But the governing classes had only themselves to blame. Those who invite a deluge should not complain when their houses are washed away. Above all, Christians should be silent. Twenty-five years before the Revolution young De la Barre was burnt, Calas was broken on the wheel, and it was decreed a capital crime to question any dogma of the Church. The best writings of the best thinkers were proscribed and burnt by the hangman; and in 1766 Councillor Denis Pasquier declared that they had burnt enough of the philosophers' books, and it was time

to burn the philosophers themselves. No wonder the Revolution came. The sacred rights of millions of men are not for ever to be trampled on with impunity, and woe to the tyrants when the down-trodden serfs turn and face them! Yes, the Revolution came, and it was soiled with bloodshed and cruelty; but it broke the power of Feudalism once for all, it freed a nation of slaves, and it gave birth to that great word of fire which eclipses the shibboleths of all the creeds—Liberty, Equality and Fraternity!

Behold that plague-stricken city! The dead corrupt the living. Despair sits on every face. But hark! What sound is that? It is the first mutter of the tempest blowing fierce and cold from the frozen north. Houses are unroofed, steeples blown down, palaces wrecked, and people killed. But why complain? The ruined structures may be rebuilt, and the dead buried. The great thing is—The plague is gone! G. W. FOOTE.

DEMOCRACY AND THE BIBLE.

It would not be a difficult task to trace an analogy between those forms of government which prevail on earth and those which are supposed to rule in heaven. Like man like god, and man in the past having usually been a slave, his gods have been, like his kings, autocratic tyrants, before whom he is an abject slave. The gods were usually magnified chieftains, and while men were divided into petty clans, each had its tribal deity as well as its living chief. The ancient Jews never thought of denying the existence of Baal, the god of the Phœnicians, or of Chemosh the god of the Amorites. Only when united under one king and brought into contact with the vast Babylonian monarchy did Monotheism prevail, and the god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was proclaimed the only God and absolute ruler of all the earth. From actual experience of human rule grew the doctrine of the sovereignty of the king of kings, and in the prostrations, presents and petitions to earthly rulers may be found the origin of religious worship.

In the Bible the prevailing doctrine of government is a theocracy. With Jesus as well as with Moses, God is the lawgiver and king, under whom other powers rule. We hear often of the Kingdom of God but never of a celestial republic. Jesus does not hesitate to compare God to a capricious king whose invited guests contemn his hospitality; to a prince who rewards profitable slaves, while he condemns the idle to be cast into outer darkness, and the refractory to be slain before his face; or he is a terrible judge with both power to kill the body and cast the soul into hell, but who may be moved from his purpose by much importunity. The twelve apostles were undisguised in their hopes of setting up a kingdom and ruling over the twelve tribes, and Jesus himself is reported as saying: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke xxii., 29-30). Again: " whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xviii., 18). There, says the Church, is the gift of both spiritual and temporal power.

The theocratic doctrine means in practice the rule of the priests, and priests have never hesitated to claim supremacy over the civil power. This fact tells in favor of those who, like B. V. in "Satires and Profanities," draw lessons from the Bible in opposition to monarchy. They have a far harder task who seek to show that the Bible is in favor of democracy or that any of its writers approve of self-government and resistance to tyranny. From Genesis to Revelation there is not the slightest indication of the right of the people to govern themselves. On the contrary, Paul, writing be it remembered to the Romans under the rule of the tyrant Nero, declares (xiii., 1): "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." We are not to call in question established power, however obtained and however used. It is blasphemy to resist—"they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Again he writes to Timothy, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers." Such is the sublime political morality of the Apostle to the Gentiles. St. Peter is equally explicit in teaching us to "fear God and honor the king." "Submit

yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors" (1 Peter ii., 13), says the divinely-appointed head of the Church. If such teaching is divine, what is more evident than that democracy is on the wrong track? Pym, Hampden, Washington, Garibaldi, and all who have ever fought for freedom were rebels no less against divine than human government, and are now expiating their crimes in hell fire—if the Bible is true. J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

A FEW weeks ago we remarked that a Christian was so great a rarity that we would go miles to see one. In reply to this F. R. Norcombe, 2 Henry Street, St. Luke's, E.C., informs us that one may be seen at that address any evening after seven o'clock. But how do we know that? We want some proof that F. R. Norcombe, or whoever is the *rara avis*, is a Christian before we devote an evening to visit him. Perhaps he will answer these preliminary questions, and then we will come to a decision. Does he *perform* as well as *believe* all Christ's commandments? Does he trust to Providence for his daily bread? Does he take no thought for the morrow? Does he steadily abstain from laying up treasures on earth? Does he believe that poverty is a blessing? Does he periodically sell all he has and give it to the poor? If a man stole his coat, would he also give him his cloak, and has he ever done it? Does he turn his left cheek for another blow when he is smitten on the right? Has he any of the signs which Jesus promised should follow those that believe? Can he play with serpents, drink poison, and heal the sick by laying his hands on them? When F. R. Norcombe has answered these questions to our satisfaction, we will give him a call.

HENRY GEORGE, who mixes up a great deal of Christian gas with his economics, asks what St. Paul would say of our present society. Well, we don't know, any more than he does; but we do know that St. Paul said very little about the society of his own time. The great social cancer of his age was slavery, and he was so far from denouncing or even censuring it, that he sent back a runaway slave to his master.

ON Sunday at Stepney Hall, Stepney Green, Mr. Henry George delivered an address on "Moses." The teachings of the great Jewish legislator, whose character as a statesman, philosopher and divine, still stood out in "bright and brilliant colors" despite the centuries that had rolled by since he flourished, were, observed Mr. George, summed up in the simple formula of "live and let live." Henry George is satirical. By the "bright and brilliant colors" he doubtless means the burning bush; and "live and let live" as an ancient saying amongst the Egyptians when tormented by the plague of lice.

THE "live and let live" motto was no protection to the Canaanites anymore than the command, "Thou shalt not steal," applied to the property of the Egyptians.

ANOTHER murderer has gone to heaven. Horace Robert Jay, who cut his sweetheart's throat and was executed for it, says he has "felt quite comfortable since his trial" and "quite forgiven for all his sins." He hopes "soon to be in heaven," and he is happy in having found Christ. He advises people to read their Bibles and turn to the Lord as he has done. In this statement, which he completed on the night before his execution and which he desired should be made public, he expresses no pity or sympathy whatever for his victim. On a previous occasion, indeed, he tried to persuade the mother that his act was for the daughter's benefit "as it had saved her from the troubles and suffering she would probably have had to undergo in the world if she had lived."

THE Lord is sending snow-storms to comfort the homeless Christian families of Granada, whom he has driven to camp in the open fields by his destructive earthquakes. The *Christian Herald* tells us that amidst the sceptic's sneer and the inane ribaldry of the profane all around us "God himself is speaking with the earthquake's voice. . . . If men will not be impressed by the prophecies of God's Word—notably those of Daniel and Revelation—then he will admonish them by the groans of travail and suffering creation, that very soon the Seventh and Last of the Seven Vials is to be poured out, when there is to be 'a great earthquake such as never was since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great, and the cities of the nations shall fall.' Therefore, undoubtedly, within a few years from now every city upon the earth will be shaken down by this coming unparalleled earthquake (Rev. xvi. 17-18)." But why does God punish Christians in Spain because there are "infidels" in England? The Spaniards are particularly orthodox. Perhaps at the latter day God will similarly send the Christians to hell to punish the Freethinkers. Who knows? Vicarious suffering is the main doctrine of Christianity.

A CORRESPONDENT in the *Daily News* suggests that as the "See of London" is now vacant the enormous income attached to the

bishopric should be reduced before a successor to the late Bishop Jackson is appointed. He can't see why a follower of Christ should need £10,000 a year and two freehold palaces to enable him to preach "Blessed be ye poor." He thinks that the £10,000 should at once be reduced to £6,000 and the surplus be given to the poorer clergy and half-starved curates. This, he thinks, should only be a commencement of the reform needed. He says that the thirty-one prelates of the Church of England receive £161,900 a year and have more than thirty-one palaces, and that there are nearly one thousand clergymen whose average stipend is under £76 per annum.

DEATH must be bitter to a man who leaves ten thousand a year (of other people's money) behind him, and we really pity poor Dr. Jackson, the late Bishop of London. But we pity him a great deal more when we reflect what his condition must be in the other world if his Bible be true. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. No camel has ever been known to perform that athletic feat, and we are therefore obliged to believe that Dr. Jackson is now frizzling in Hades. We hope the new Bishop will take a thought and mend. As he values his immortal soul let him renounce the nine thousand nine hundred pounds, and live on a hundred a year.

AT Dundee, a man named John James Moore, who described himself as an ex-monk, stating that he had been known as "Brother Alphonse," but who had been laboring at Dundee as an anti-Popery lecturer and Protestant missionary, was brought before the Circuit Court and sentenced to penal servitude for five years for unnatural offences.

THE Vicar of St. Bartholomew's, Dover, appears to think that no reverent church-goer will indulge in the worldly frivolity of a cold or a cough at this trying time of the year. The other Sunday he ordered several unfortunate members of his congregation out of the church for disturbing his sermon with their somewhat too audible coughing. When they had gone, he resumed his discourse from the beginning, so that none of its precious pearls of wisdom might by any chance be lost to the world. The *Dover Telegraph* recommends this amiable pastor to distribute cough drops and chlorodyne lozenges next Sunday before commencing his sermon.

SKY-PILOT CHURTON considers that people with colds ought not to go to church. We more than agree with him, for we would extend the recommendation to all people that are without colds as well.

A CHURCHWARDEN and sexton of St. Ann's Church, Hoxton, had a fight last Sunday in the house of God, just before divine service. The churchwarden wished to pull down curtains hiding the confessional box. Both Christians appeared next morning in the dock at Worship Street Police Court, but were discharged as they had only been practising the text, "Hit his eye, Peter; be not afraid."

A LOCAL preacher attempted to force his way to the pulpit of Earle Street Wesleyan Chapel, Crewe, although "inhibited" by the superintendent minister. Being prevented, he harangued the crowd from a chair in the street, until he was moved on by the police to a side street.

THE Rev. H. Pahtahquahong Chase, hereditary chief of the Ojibbeway Indians, has been preaching at Dublin. We daresay the coin he has gathered on the Christian war-path will enliven the hereditary wigwam on his return home.

THE Arbroath Presbyterians are dreadfully annoyed at the Sunday skating. They mean to stop it if they can. Scotland is still a century behind the rest of the world in its Sabbatarianism.

THE Rev. J. Davies, curate of Presteign, is being tried on eight charges of drunkenness and profane swearing.

KIDDERMINSTER has been holding special thanksgiving services in all its churches and chapels for the abatement of typhoid fever. If God hadn't sent the fever he would have had no thanks. Isn't this bribing him to send more fevers so as to get more thanks?

The *Lancet* says: "Some of the best friends of religious newspapers, and even of missionary journals, are becoming seriously scandalised at the growth of the advertising of quack medicines in their columns."

CHRISTIANITY makes but slow progress in New Guinea owing to the competition of Mohammedanism, which the natives decidedly prefer. Now that Christian governments with millions of bayonets at command are annexing the country the spread of Christianity will be far more rapid.

DURING mass in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, a middle-aged man cut his throat in front of the altar. This necessitated the closing of the church until it was re-consecrated by the Bishop of Tripoli under a commission from the Cardinal

Vicar. If the bloodshed caused by the churches outside their walls were only held to desecrate them in the same way, few indeed would be the sacred edifices that would still remain open.

GENERAL BOOTH waxes fat and kicks. His latest piece of impudence is characteristic of the man and his cause. He has just stated at Exeter Hall that he intends to ask the Government to give him the camels employed in the Soudan Expedition after General Gordon is relieved. Perhaps the Salvation Showman is joking. At any rate, there is no chance of his succeeding in such a "cheeky" attempt on the British taxpayer; although there is no saying what might happen if we had a Tory Government, with the pious father of Lord Garmoyle as one of its leading spirits.

BOOTH alleges that his Army has converted "some hundred Buddhists in Ceylon." Walker. The Buddhist priests in Ceylon are a very learned, intelligent and self-denying body of men, and for the natives to leave them for Booth's gang would be like leaving a first-rate theatre for a penny gaff.

MRS. BOOTH is no less impudent than her "old man." She not only depletes the refusal of parents and guardians to let their children or charges go abroad in the Army service, but she advises the young people to go whether they get permission or not. Perhaps one reason why the Booths don't want their Army lambs to read the Bible too much is a fear that they might come across the text "Honor thy father and thy mother."

How doth the busy General B—
Improve his opportunities;
He gathers money everywhere
With ceaseless opportunities.

The Army are now exhorted to buy only Salvation tea. Trade mark, "Blood and Fire."

MRS. THOBRON has just obtained a divorce on the usual grounds from her husband who is a member of the Salvation Army. Mr. Thobron and the woman with whom he cohabits keep a cocoa store in connection with the Army. If they are immoral they are religious.

JOHN GRAY, a Salvationist of Derby, Yorkshire, has been charged with deserting his wife and family and taking up with another woman belonging to the Army.

GEORGE GORDON, a Salvationist, was committed for trial at Dover for stabbing a shipmate named Hall on Christmas for singing Christmas carols of which this zealous soldier of the Lord did not approve. How wonderfully this Salvation craze restrains and improves people!

THE Salvationists at Melbourne have converted the hangman. But the brethren, though they sing "the vilest sinner may return," rather demur to such company, and don't welcome him with much heartiness at their meetings.

THE Dewsbury police caught their burglar at a Salvation Army meeting. The paper that furnishes us with this item recommends the police to imitate this wise example of the Dewsbury police as the result will be a preceptible diminution in the long list of missing malefactors.

CLARKE, the tram-car driver and Salvationist at Chester, whose leg was healed by faith, often shows his friends how perfect the cure has been by jumping off his car while in motion, and by leaping, shouting and praying. The other day the leg gave way, and he was dragged along the road some distance, holding on by the reins, and very narrowly escaped being killed. The company have suspended him for his extravagant vagaries. He still asserts that the leg is perfect.

NEAR Chehalis, Wyoming Territory, one Sunday night, William Pearson, "a well-to-do farmer, who is a strong believer in spiritualism," killed his infant child with a hammer, in obedience to what he imagined was an order from a higher power. He showed the dead infant to his wife, "also a spiritualist," and said that "if she would cut her throat, he would do the same." Both were found on Monday with their throats cut, but still living; and Pearson revived sufficiently to tell the dreadful story.

A CLAPHAM correspondent gives another instance of Christian check. A Christian lady has been going from house to house begging subscriptions to make a present to the Rev. Mr. Tyler on his birthday. Any poor person who does not see the sweet reasonableness of this lawful begging is of course put down in her black book and talked about. At one door she was met with the response from a boy: "Father knows a poor man who is ill, and I know he would rather give it to him if he has anything to spare." The Christian lady departed, looking very black.

A HEADLESS ghost is said to have made its appearance near Ephrata, in Pennsylvania, having been first seen by the Rev.

Daniel Witner, who describes himself as "almost paralysed with horror" at the sight. Is it the Holy Ghost himself trying a new sensation?

THE Orange party in Liverpool are up in arms at the prospect of the consecration of a new church dedicated to St. Agnes, at which a number of well-known Ritualistic clergymen are announced to attend. Of course Immutability has changed since the days when he gave directions for manufacture of Aaron's breeks and the holy candlesticks and snuffers, and issued his perpetual injunction against imitators of his sacred ointment. Vestments and candles are his abomination now!

DEACON TERRY, of Long Island, ran away with Parson Downs' spouse. He however returned and has been forgiven by his wife. Mrs. Downs does not fare so well. Her reverend husband refused to condone the offence without a monetary consideration.

JOHN RANDALL, who "used to study religious books," was found dead under the communion-table in a chapel in Kingsland Road. He had shot himself with a revolver. He had written on a card: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord's house, when life is not worth living.—J. Randall." Is Atheism really the great cause of suicide, good Christian friends, or do you not think your preachers are guilty of saying that which is not true in order to discredit opponents?

THE Rev. W. Rigby-Murray has been denouncing the betting system in unmeasured terms. The *Sporting Chronicle* in reply refers to the "shocking revelations of clerical vice and dishonesty which have lately filled our police-court reports," and asks, "Do we not read almost daily, I might ask with at least equal justice, 'of the frightful consequences' of the clerical system, in the shape of immoralities and iniquities, frauds and crimes, to say nothing of the general incapacity for logical reasoning 'it commonly brought about?'"

MR. EDMUND YATES is undergoing four months' imprisonment in Holloway Gaol. Mr. Foote spent twelve months in the same establishment. Mr. Yates wears his own clothes, receives frequent letters, takes as much exercise as he pleases, has a daily newspaper, books and writing materials, is constantly visited by his friends, provides his own food, and is allowed half-a-pint of wine a day, and is lodged in a wing apart from the ordinary criminals. Mr. Foote was dressed in prison garb, wrote and received one letter in three months, was under lock and key in a dim cell twenty-two hours out of every twenty-four, had no newspaper, only a few books at a time, and no writing materials except a slate and pencil, saw his visitors once a quarter in the gaol-box, was fed on prison fare and lodged with pickpockets and burglars. Mr. Yates libelled a living Lord, and Mr. Foote told the truth about a dead one. Such is English justice under the influence of Christianity.

THE *Journal of Education* gives the following as *bonâ-fide* answers to questions set in recent examinations:—"First they made the Apostles' Creed, but no one would believe it; so they made the Nicene Creed, and some didn't believe it; then they made the Athanasian Creed, and that no one could help believing."—"Zacharias and Elizabeth had a son named John. When he grew older, he had his head cut off to please a young lady." Men often have their heads turned on this account—but cut off never, at least by their own consent.

AT Odessa, Anthony Pregon, a peasant, has been sentenced to imprisonment for three years and nine months for preaching against the image-worship of the Russian Church. How beautifully Christianity guides men to the practice of mutual toleration and love!

THE Jerusalemists are a new Russian sect. They wear on their chests a printed card, given to them by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who puts their money in *his* chest. They pledge themselves to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and their meetings are held at night by the light of faith, carnal illumination being tabooed. We hope they do not imitate the license as well as the darkness of the early Christians.

A CHRISTIAN contemporary informs us that in Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Germany, a parent who takes a child, preparing for confirmation, to a masked ball, is deprived of church privileges and Christian burial.

THE Congo Conference has adopted a resolution against the slave trade. Much more than words, however, will be needed to wipe out the bitter lessons which Christians have taught the natives during the past. Lord Muncester, in his "Historical Sketches," tells us of a gentleman experienced in African trade who wrote thus in 1726:—"The discerning natives account it their greatest unhappiness that they were ever visited by the Europeans. They say that we Christians introduced the traffic of slaves, and that before our coming they lived in peace; but, say they, it is observable that wherever Christianity cometh, there come with it a sword, a gun, powder and ball."

EDITORIAL NOTICE.

Our Correspondents are requested to notice the Change in our Address. Letters should be addressed to us at 14 CLERKENWELL GREEN, E.C. All Business Letters should be addressed (as before) to Mr. Ramsey, at the shop, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Jan. 25, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, London, at 7.30, "Bible Blasphemy."
Tuesday, Jan. 27, Freethought Institute, York Street, Walworth, at 8.30, "Christianity in its Coffin."

FEBRUARY 1, Claremont Hall, London; 8, Hall of Science, London; 15, Milton Hall; 22, Liverpool.

MAROH 1, Manchester; 15, Northampton; 22, Grimsby; 29, Glasgow.

APRIL 12, Milton Hall; 19, Hall of Science; 26, Hall of Science.

MAY 10, Milton Hall.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. 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. 3s.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. Displayed Advertisements:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—Argus, J. Davidson, H. Wooton, H. R. Wright, J. Johns, Everton Toffee, D.E.

J. H. ROGERS.—The work of Celsus is lost. From the quotations given by Origen a hundred years later it is evident he was acquainted, not with our Gospels, but with similar compositions.—We do not think the Theosophists have any regular place of meeting.

B. FREE.—Hardly up to the mark. A parody should be closer to the original.

E. W. B.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. W. GRANEHAW.—Thanks for your bright letter and the newspaper.

BAWDEN BYNE.—Thanks. Your missionary stories shall be starred.

T. TURNER.—You will see that Mr. Foote lectures on "Bible Blasphemy" at Milton Hall this evening (Jan. 25).

A. J. SMITH.—Christmas Number sent. The fault lay with your news-agent. You should insist on his supplying you. We are pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* has now many readers in Hounslow, although there were none when you went there in July. We are not free to reveal the gentleman's name; otherwise we should be glad to oblige you.

J. H. WHITIAM.—Sorry we cannot oblige you. See answer to A. J. Smith. Mr. Symes might put you on the track you want.

J. W. (Padstow) writes that Freethought is spreading rapidly in Cornwall, and the orthodox are at their wits' end to know how to cope with it.

H. G. SWIFT.—Your verses will appear in due course.

F. G. ROCKETT.—Cuttings are always welcome.

WARRINGTON, E. C. C., informs us that a meeting will be held at the Cocoa Rooms, Horsemarket Street, on Jan. 28, at 7.30, for the purpose of forming a branch of the N. S. S.

B. YOUNG.—You are wrong. The Ecumenical Council of 1870 claimed for the Pope not only infallibility in matters of faith and morals, but also in matters which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church.

F. A. DRIVERS.—Paper received with thanks. Pleased to hear that you find "the Christmas Number immense."

TURPIN.—There is no law to prevent the Haverhill bigots from making fools of themselves, but there is a law to prevent the post-master from inspecting the contents of your letters. We should be sorry to charge him with such a crime, but his informing the committee in your presence of the nature of your correspondence, was, to say the least of it, extremely curious. You had better be on your guard all round.

J. MATHER.—Before we deal with the correspondence you had better ask the Rev. Dr. Hayman whether he objects to his letter being published. It is hardly fair to print a man's letter without his consent.

A. L. informs us that Mr. Arthur Moss's recent visit to Northampton was very successful, and that the *Guardian* gave a good report of his lecture on "Brain and Soul."

SEVERAL correspondents remain unanswered till next week. We beg to observe that those who desire answers the same week that they write in should see that their letters reach us not later than Tuesday morning.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Norwood Review—Sheffield Independent—Barnsley Independent—St. Louis Post—Dispatch—Diamond Fields Advertiser—Liberty—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Church Reformer—Dover Telegraph—Northern Daily Mail—Cambria Leader—Protestant Standard—People's Journal—Derbyshire Courier—Owl—Day of Days.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a splendid audience at Milton Hall last Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's new lecture on "Cheap Salvation," which evidently gave great satisfaction, as the lecturer sat down amid a storm of applause, and had to rise again and bow acknowledgment. This evening (January 25) Mr. Foote lectures again at Milton Hall on "Bible Blasphemy," by special request of several friends.

THE *Church Reformer* for January has an article on "Oath or Affirmation?" with special reference to Mr. Hopwood's Bill, for which it bespeaks the "enthusiastic support" of its readers. The article contains some interesting quotations from Chrysostom and Augustine, showing the dislike of oaths among the leaders of the early Christian Church.

WE see that the editor, Stewart D. Headlam, has been presented with a new year's gift by the Church and Stage Guild, in the shape of a purse containing forty guineas. Mr. Headlam deserves the recognition, and we dare say the cash will be very useful to a poor clergyman who is systematically kept down because he is too good for his cloth. Mr. Headlam will of course deny this. He thinks the Church a glorious institution, which only needs a little "reforming" to become almost divine. Well, we won't destroy his dream, and perhaps we couldn't if we tried; but in our opinion "reforming" the Church is like "reforming" a rusty old kettle. You had better leave it alone and go in for a fresh article, for tinkering will only make bigger holes.

DISCUSSING with Freethinkers is better than persecuting them, and we are glad to see that some of the London clergy are beginning to recognise it. The Sunday afternoon lectures are being continued in St. Peter's Club Room, St. Peter's Street, Hackney, and "free discussion" is allowed after them. Last Sunday the Rev. Brooke Lambert, Vicar of Greenwich, lectured on "Christianity and Darwin." By the way, how is it these clergymen lecture to "men only," a phrase which would convey a purient suggestion to some minds? Do they fancy that women have no souls to save, or that they are all booked through to heaven already?

GERALD MASSEY is lecturing in Australia on "Man in Search of his Soul for 50,000 years." It is a good while to be looking for so small a matter. One opponent considers he has refuted the lecturer by quotations from the earlier poems written when Mr. Massey was a Christian.

THE Children's Party at the London Hall of Science was a great success, and reflected great credit on the Committee. About five hundred little ones assembled, and enjoyed themselves right merrily from six o'clock till eleven, and even then some of them looked as though they wanted another five hours' fun. It is needless to say that the wish was not shared by their elders, who had laboriously ministered to their pleasures all the evening. Mrs. Besant and Miss Hypatia Bradlaugh distributed the prizes at ten o'clock, and they had a pretty hard hour's work. Every child got something, and those who had won in the games received a really substantial present. The most amusing part of the proceedings was when the youngsters walked about comparing their "finds." The most appalling thing was the discord of tambourines, squeaking animals, drums and whistles. We left the Babel before our tympanum was quite broken. Happily the parents were selecting their offspring just then with a view to removal.

How children can eat and drink, to be sure! We refrain from printing the weight of buns and cake and the measure of milk and lemonade that were consumed by those juvenile Freethinkers. We will tell a true story instead. One little fellow burst out crying near us, and we supposed that he had tumbled down and knocked himself in the hurdle-race. But on inquiry it was found that he had no bruise, and that he had not been in the race at all. His complaint was internal. "Boo, boo," he explained, "I've only had one bun and two bits of cake." We confess that would have been more than sufficient (of the sort) for our stomach, but this young hopeful was differently constituted. His sobs died away as he was led up to the buffet for a fresh supply.

CHRISTOPHER CRAYON, of the *Christian World*, states that at the opening of the Japanese Village in London there was sarcastic laughter when Mr. Buhicrosan, a Japanese merchant in the City, declared his intention of establishing a Christian mission in Japan. Of course. Everybody laughs at missionary enterprises except those engaged in them and the credulous dupes who support them.

THE Rev. J. M. Whitton has recently been preaching on "Religious Thieves and Robbers." He went back to the ages before Christ for all his illustrations. We could give him a good many nearer home if he wishes to bring his sermon up to date.

THE bigots who sought to exclude the *Freethinker* from the Okenshaw Reading-room, Wellington, Durham, have sustained a signal defeat. At the quarterly meeting, on a show of hands being taken, there was a good majority in favor of the paper. The introduction of *Progress* was then moved and acceded to without a division, the Christian party not wishing to suffer another defeat. Hitherto no member had seen *Progress*, the January number of which now lies on the table.

THE Sydenham and Forest Hill House of Commons has carried the following resolution:—"That in the opinion of this House the Blasphemy Laws should be repealed." The resolution was

ably introduced by Mr. T. J. Underhill, seconded by Mr. Matthews, supported by Mr. S. S. Bromhead, and passed by a majority of 57 to 54.

WE earnestly impress on Freethinkers the necessity for keeping this question to the front. Every candidate for every constituency should be plainly asked whether he will vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and plainly told that he cannot expect the support of Freethinkers if he gives a negative answer. Never mind the talk about "dividing the Liberal party." The Liberal party deserves to be divided if it will not support the freedom of the press, and allow religion to be treated as freely as any other subject.

THE Liberals in the Hackney Parliament brought forward the Affirmation question and reduced the Conservative majority of thirty-two down to six. One Conservative spoke and voted for the motion. He held that oaths were useless and irreverent. The Queen herself, he considered, had broken her coronation oath when she disestablished the Irish Church.

DR. PRESSE is grievously mortified by the irreligious conduct of the Paris Municipal Council. That nest of Jacobin Radicalism "has worthily closed its proceedings for 1884 by levying on the department of the Seine a tax of 500,000 francs in order to take into its own control the choice and supply of the books of elementary instruction, with the avowed intention of assuring itself that no book shall be placed in the hands of the children in which the name of God is even mentioned." What an outcry the sky-pilots make when they are shorn of their usurped privileges. They actually think themselves the victims of persecution if they are not allowed to hector it over their lay brethren, and especially over schoolmasters, whom they recognise as their greatest enemies. They are always telling us that belief in God is innate to the human mind, yet they feel it is all over with them when they cannot teach their dogmas to little children.

THE United Radical Club, Kaye Street, Hackney Road, is approaching completion, and when finished it will be perhaps the finest in London. Besides every convenience for the members, there will be a large, handsome hall for meetings, seventy feet by thirty, and twenty-eight feet high. The more of these clubs the better. They are a healthy sign of popular spirit and independence; and they will be the arsenals and citadels of Democracy in its final fight with Privilege.

THERE is in the press, and will shortly be published, the Jewish "Life of Christ"—the famous *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*. The work will contain the complete text in English, except a few verses that must be veiled in Latin, an introduction, and voluminous notes by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. It will be published at a low price, and as it has never before been accessible to English readers, although it is a most remarkable document, it will doubtless have an extensive sale.

A NEW Freethought paper has been started in Philadelphia entitled the *Agnostic*. It promises to "fearlessly present the gospel of free speech, free press and a free people."

THE National Reform Union has passed a resolution in favor of Mr. Hopwood's Affirmation Bill. The committee asks the strenuous support of all Liberals in bringing about an immediate settlement of this question.

THE Toronto Conference of Freethinkers has been highly successful, and is likely to lead to a closer union of Freethinkers in Canada and the United States.

WE are glad to see that the Kentish farmers are continuing to agitate against the right of the Church to carry off half their profits in the shape of extraordinary tithe. A public meeting was held in the Maidstone Town Hall to protest against this legalised robbery, on Thursday, January 22, T. H. Bolton Esq. in the chair.

THE Rev. Charles Beard, of the Unitarian Chapel, Renshaw Street, Liverpool, and a prominent Liberal politician, is giving addresses at the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, on Sunday evenings. Last Sunday he expressed his disbelief in the eternity of punishment, and held that it mattered little what opinions a man held provided his life were a correct one. The Renshaw Street congregation is reported to be the wealthiest in Liverpool, and the teaching there apparently differs greatly from the orthodox Christianity.

PROF. BLACKIE'S lecture before the Glasgow Sunday Society has brought down on that body the anathemas of the Free Presbytery. Mr. James Shaw Maxwell, to whose energy the organisation of the Sunday Lecture Society is owing, presiding last Sunday at the lecture of Mr. Archibald Forbes, took occasion to give a stinging rebuke to the Sabbatarian fanatics who are trying to deprive the Society of St. Andrew's Hall. We are glad to know the Society is so well established that the bigots are little likely to be successful. Scotland is still sadly in need of Freethought leaven on the Sunday Question.

A LETTER from Sydney to the *Western Daily Press* says that missionaries are more wanted in the Australian colonies than among any heathens. Freethinkers are gaining ground fast. They "have a large association and many eloquent speakers and on Sundays they engage all the theatres and music halls for their lectures which they make enticing by vocal and instrumental music, and their doctrines are spreading widely."

A ROMAN CATHOLIC REPLY TO INGERSOLL.

(Concluded from page 23).

OUR priest deals thus with the extermination of the Canaanites by the divine command. (As the reply to the six words of Ingersoll's covers five pages we must necessarily omit portions of it.)

INGERSOLL—"He (God) ordered the murder of millions. COMMENT—He never authorised or ordered the *murder* of any one, from Abel to Garfield . . . As creatures of God we are absolutely his, and can have no rights whatever as against him. To God the death of man is but the passing from one state of existence to another, from one department to another in the same universe . . . Physical death therefore, is a trifling circumstance in man's immortal career. [Being murdered is a "trivial circumstance." This is what priestly ethics come to.] He who has the absolute right to take life, cannot be guilty of *murder* in taking it, for *murder* is *unjust* killing, and there is no unjust killing in the taking of life by him who has the absolute right to take it . . . the destruction of that guilty people was just, because ordered by him who had the absolute right to order it, whether they were guilty or not.

We decidedly prefer Father Lambert's outspoken enunciation of this doctrine of divine irresponsibility to the half-hearted and evasive declarations of so many of the modern clergy; for the mind of man can revolt against it the more thoroughly.

Whatever crimes and cruelties God may commit are to be glorified as just and noble actions! All human sense of morality and right is to be cast into the mire whenever it conflicts with priestly assertions about God. The most absolute and unquestioning submission of the reason, the will, the conscience, and the heart, to God as represented by his priest, is the only course open to a man. No wonder Eugene Sue depicted the princely devotee of Bowanee as entering the service of the Jesuits with alacrity on the ground that Thuggism only murdered the bodies of its victims but the Christianity of the priests murdered their souls and made "living corpses" of them.

As to the abominable accusations brought against the Canaanites, we regard them as the slanders heaped upon the heads of victims by those who outraged and murdered them. We cannot allow pious murderers of women and children to escape condemnation because they accuse the helpless dead of sexual abominations of which the infants certainly were not guilty and of which their parents were far less guilty than were the saintly ruffians who murdered them and burned their cities. Lot and his daughters were of the people of God, and no instance is given of their crime having been imitated by the probably far less bestial and certainly far more refined Canaanites.

Father Lambert demolishes the charge of robbery in the same high-handed way as the charge of murder. The argument (!) runs thus:

INGERSOLL—"He (God) gave to Jewish marauders the flocks and herds of others."

COMMENT—Those marauders, as you call them, could not possibly have had a better title. God, as Creator of all, has absolute dominion over all things, and against his title there is none.

It is pitiful to think of the degradation and enslavement of the human mind which can thus abdicate the throne of reason and hold that all moral charges are triumphantly disposed of by the mere priestly assertion that the powerful criminal in question has the full and perfect right to kill, or torture, or rob the slaves he has made. Such grovelling at the feet of absolute despotism is, however, only too common, whether the despotism be a reality on earth or only a sham in heaven.

But there are limits, it would appear, even to the liberty of infamy which a Catholic priest can bestow upon his God. When Ingersoll says that God "gave captive maidens to gratify the lust of captors," the priest does not venture to reply as before, that God who made the women has an absolute and unquestionable right to dispose of their persons as he thinks fit. Father Lambert is in the nineteenth century and amidst the American democracy,

and his religion derives its principal support from women. Had he lived in a less civilised clime and age, and had he taught a religion which like the Hebrew and the Mahomedan religions appealed mainly to men, we fully believe he would have been as courageous in defending God's right to dispose of women's chastity as he has been in defending his absolute right to the disposal of women's lives. Not being able to adopt this course, our defender of the faith has to "flatly deny" Ingersoll's statement and accuse him of "shameless misrepresentations of history." He says:—

The Hebrew military laws *did not* abandon captive women to the insolence or brutality of captors. On the contrary, they made special provision forbidding the first (!) familiarities of the soldier with his captives. If you study the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy, verses 10 to 14, you will learn that the soldier was obliged to make the captive his wife, or to respect her person and honor.

Our priest is so egregiously stupid, we find, or so wilfully blind, that he does not see that he has conceded the whole question at issue. He only claims that the *first* familiarities were repressed. He really acknowledges that the woman could be made captive by force and be carried away, and that, whether she liked it or not, her master could compel her to become "his wife," as it is euphemistically styled—so much his "wife," in the modern sense of the term that if he had "no delight in her" he might turn her out of house and home, to go whither she would, as Abraham did Hagar, but he was not to sell her as a slave. And this our priest thinks is "to respect her person and honor." Capture her, work your brutal will upon her, and turn her and her child out when you are tired of them, but if you agreed to call her your wife as long as it suited you, or if you had some religious gibberish muttered over the pair of you by a priestly quack, you have respected her person and honor! It may, indeed, be very seriously argued that the law was not intended to protect captives, but only to *hinder* formal marriage by interposing a month's delay. If a man desired to make a beautiful captive his "wife," he had to wait. If he desired to possess her without making her his wife, what then? The text is simply silent on the matter.

But why does our priest conveniently forget the events described in Numbers xxxi., which took place before the above restraining law, such as it is, was made? Thirty-two thousand "women children" were captured, and by the word of the Lord and of Moses were divided between the warriors and the congregation and the priests. Women and cattle are alike spoken of as "prey" and as "booty," and there is not the faintest suggestion of the hypocritical formality of a marriage-service to consecrate and beautify and justify the hideous outrage.

Turning to smaller matters, we find that our shaven Jupiter launches the petty thunders of his wrath against the wilfully "dishonest" wretches who reject the interpolated passages in Josephus and Mark. As priestly fact-compeller, he knows beyond the possibility of an honest doubt that these forgeries are perfectly genuine. He also knows that the evidences for the gospels and the four evangelists are stronger than those for Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Caesar, Livy, etc. (p. 135), that the Greeks and Romans were not as brave, and kind, and generous as the Jews were (p. 119), that in their rise and progress false religions have nothing in common with Christianity (p. 131), that our race did not fall through a woman, but through a man (p. 118), that "God did not fail to give his revelation [the Bible] to the whole world" (p. 119), that that which is eternal must therefore be infinite (p. 20), and many other surprising facts whose blaspheming controverters he does not fail to anathematise for their "false, foolish and reckless statements," "prodigal use of deceit and sophistry," "silly trash," "brazen egotism," "unmitigated hypocrisy," "petty chicanery," "falsehood," and so forth. Father Lambert reminds us somehow of a Mallock frightfully degenerated into a truculent bully who is burdened with the priestly necessity of attempting some display of dignity, suavity and logic, and is restrained by the priestly habit (in both senses) from the personal use of the bludgeons and brickbats for which we fancy he must feel that the hard words which break no bones are but a poor and unnatural substitute.

We must now bring our remarks to an end, for the present at least. There were many passages we had marked for comment, but the book is intrinsically unworthy even

of notice, its logic throughout being as weak and contemptible as its language is strong and reprehensible. Those, however, who think that we should confine our criticism to the high-class, semi-hypocritical Christianity of the upper few, and leave such works as this alone, would prevent us attacking and exhibiting the real living monster called Christianity, and would have us deal only with drawing-room representations of it by the most skillful artists.

W. P. BALL.

THE Rev. B. Willder says we ought to be thankful that Providence has placed death at the end of life and not in the middle, so that we might have time to prepare for our latter end.

THE *Journal Religieuse* says that a number of influential Jews from Russia, Austria, and Germany are about to meet at Kattoiwitz in Russia, to consult about colonising Palestine. About £10,000 has been subscribed for this object.

HERE is a portion of an interview with a Queensland native, as reported in a Sydney newspaper: "Missionary very good fellow. Missionary he come along an' see Kanaka boy with banana leaf around him. Missionary he say, 'White man God no like banana leaf; white man God like calico.' 'Oh! and who sold the calico?' 'Oh, missionary, he sell calico.'"

JUDICIOUS ADVERTISING.—A man was denouncing newspaper advertising to a crowd of listeners. "Last week," said he, "I had an umbrella stolen from the vestibule of the — church. It was a gift; and, valuing it very highly, I spent double its worth in advertising, but have not recovered it." "How did you word your advertisement?" asked a merchant. "Here it is," said the man, producing a slip cut from a newspaper. The merchant took it and read, "Lost from the vestibule of the — church last Sabbath evening, a black silk umbrella. The gentleman who took it will be handsomely rewarded on leaving it at No. — San Fernando Street." "Now," said the merchant, "I am a liberal advertiser, and have always found that it paid me well. A great deal depends upon the manner in which an advertisement is put. Let us try for your umbrella again, and if you do not acknowledge then that advertising pays, I will buy you a new one." The merchant then took a slip of paper from his pocket and wrote, "If the man who was seen to take an umbrella from the vestibule of the — church last Sabbath evening does not wish to get into trouble and have a stain cast upon the Christian character which he values so highly, he will return it to No. — San Fernando Street. He is well known." This duly appeared in the paper, and on the following morning the man was astonished when he opened the front door of his residence. On the porch lay at least a dozen umbrellas of all shades and sizes that had been thrown in from the side-walk, while the front yard was literally paved with umbrellas. Many of them had notes attached to them saying that they had been taken by mistake, and begging the looser to keep the little affair quiet.—*American Paper*.



THE CROSS CHRIST CAME TO BRING.*

OT Peace, that poets love to sing
And even preachers mention—
Not peace, not peace, he came to bring,
But murder and dissension.

And if, like tyrants throned on swords,
He talked of love and kindness,
Who knows 'twas more than honeyed words
Imposing on our blindness?

He saw the strife on points of faith
He left obscure and tangled;
He saw slain millions yield their breath,
Shot-riddled, stabbed, and mangled;

* "I came not to send peace but a sword" (Matt. x., 34). "I am come to send fire on the earth" (Luke xii., 49). "If any man . . . hate not his father and mother . . . he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv., 26). See also Christ's horrible doctrine of revenge in the shape of eternal torture, his condemnation of unbelief as the worst of sins (Mark vi., 11), and his thorough approval of the Old Testament atrocities (Matt. v., 17—19; Luke xvi., 29—31; Deut. xiii., 6—11; Exodus xxxi., 14—17).

And yet he left no written word,
To stay hell's fiendish laughter,
But only sayings oft absurd,
Unpenned for centuries after.

And now his gospel damns and mocks,
And hellish hatred leavens;
He should have written it on rocks,
Or on the very heavens,

That men might know the very truth,
And live in peace like brothers.
But no! Christ could not write, forsooth;
He left that task to others.

Of love? Of hate? Of hell's dismay?
Of swords and scenes unsightly?
Which words were his? And who shall say
He can select them rightly?
W. P. BALL.

PROFANE JOKES.

A BOY was asked in school whether his father was a Christian? "Yes, sir," he replied, "but he isn't working at it much."

TALMAGE is noted for his ugliness. "Let me make myself a little plainer, brethren," said the wide-mouthed preacher on one occasion. "You can't do it, gov'nor," shouted a wicked auditor, who was immediately ejected.

RELIGIOUS EXAMINER (to boy): "Now my little boy, can you say the Lord's Prayer?" Boy: "Yes, sir." R. E.: "Well, say it." (Boy goes on.) R. E.: "Very good. Now, my child, can you tell me why you say, 'give us this day our daily bread?' Why don't you say our weekly bread, or monthly bread?" Boy: "Please, sir, we don't like it stale."

We always did relish a bit of fine writing now and then, and this from the *Fort Scott Telegram* is peculiarly good:—"Death, with fleshless knuckles, rapped at the door of Mrs. J. N. B.'s soul, and obedient to the inexorable call, the spirit of that loved woman floated up to its Creator, leaving her beloved husband, children, and friends to mourn over the mortal casket."

"CHILDREN," said a serious clergyman, "I am going to tell you about Peter. Who knows who Peter was?" No answer. "Cannot anyone—those big girls—tell me who Peter was?" Still no reply. "Can any little boy or girl in the school tell me who Peter was?" "I can," said a little fellow in the further corner. "Ah, that's a good boy. Now you come by my side, and stand up on this chair, and tell those big girls who Peter was." The little fellow mounted the chair, and in a shrill voice repeated—

Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater,
Had a wife and couldn't keep her.

At this point he was stopped by the alarmed clergyman, but not before the children were roaring with laughter, as they took up the rhyme and repeated it to the close. They all knew who Peter was.

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