

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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A PENITENTIAL PROCESSION.

Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God.—JONAH. III., 8.

JEHOVAH THE RIPPER.

THE Whitechapel monster has once more startled and horrified London, and again he has left absolutely no clue to his identity. He is the mystery of mysteries. He comes and goes like a ghost. Murder marks his appearance, but that is all we know of him. The rest is silence. The police, the vigilance societies, and the private detectives are all baffled. They can only stare at each other in blind dismay, as helpless as the poor victims of the fiend's performances. All sorts of theories are started, but they are all in the air—the wild conjectures of irresponsible imaginations. All sorts of stories are afloat, but they contradict each other. As for descriptions of the monster, it is enough to say that the police have advertised for nine or ten "wanted" gentlemen, of various heights, dimensions, colors, and costumes, who are all the very same person.

We have no desire to dabble in murder, nor do we aspire to turn an honest penny by the minute description of bodily mutilations. But while the Whitechapel atrocities are engaging the public attention, we are tempted to contribute our quota of speculation as to the monster's identity. We thought of doing so before, but

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we reflected that it was perfectly useless while such a pig-headed person as Sir Charles Warren was at the head of the police. Now, however, that he is gone, and there is a chance of common-sense suggestions being fairly considered, we venture to propound our theory, in the hope that it will at least be treated on its merits.

Well now, to the point. Our theory is that the Whitechapel murderer is—"Whom?" the reader cries. Wait awhile. Brace up your nerves for the dread intelligence. The East-end fiend, the Whitechapel devil, the slaughterer and mutilator of women, is—Jehovah!

"Blasphemous" is shouted from a million throats. But science is used to such shriekings. We pause till the noise subsides, and then proceed to point out that our theory fulfils the grand condition of fitting in with all the facts.

The Whitechapel murderer is shrouded in mystery. So is Jehovah. The Whitechapel murderer comes no one knows whence and goes no one knows whither. So does Jehovah. The Whitechapel murderer appears in different disguises. So does Jehovah. The Whitechapel murderer's movements baffle all vigilance. So do Jehovah's. The Whitechapel murderer comes and goes, appears and disappears, with the celerity and noiselessness of a ghost. So does Jehovah, who *is* a ghost. Thus far, then, the similarity is marvellously close, and a *prima facie* case of identity is established.

It will very likely be objected that Jehovah is incapable of such atrocities. But this is the misconception of ignorance or the politeness of hypocrisy. Jehovah has written his autobiography, and on his own confession his murderous exploits were very similar to those of the Whitechapel terror. Appealing to that incontrovertible authority, we propose to show that he has every disposition to commit these enormities.

According to his own history of himself, Jehovah is passionately fond of bloodshed. The sanguine fluid which courses in our veins is the only thing that appeases him. "Without shedding of blood," he tells us through the pen of St. Paul, "there is no remission" of any debts owing to him. He called on Abraham, his friend, to stick a knife into his own son. He slew the first-born of every family in Egypt in a single night. He accepted the blood of a young virgin offered him by Jephthah. He slew 50,070 men at Beth-Shemesh for looking into his private trunk. He ordered his "chosen" friends, a famous set of banditti, to exterminate men, women, children, and even animals, and to "leave alive nothing that breatheth." He massacred 70,000 citizens of Palestine because their king took a census, a social experiment to which he has a rooted antipathy. He had a house especially built for him, and gave orders that it should daily be drenched with blood. According to one of his candid friends, Archdeacon Farrar, "the floors must literally have swum with blood, and under the blaze of Eastern sunlight, the burning of fat and flesh on the large blazing altar must have been carried on amid heaps of sacrificial foulness—offal and skins and thick smoke and steaming putrescence." On one occasion, when in a state of murderous frenzy, he cried out, "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh."

Jehovah's passion for bloodshed is proved out of his own mouth. Let us now see his love of mutilation. He generally did this by proxy, and enjoyed the spectacle without undergoing the trouble. Some of his friends took a gentleman named Adoni-bezek, and "cut off his thumbs and his great toes." Wishing to kill a certain Eglon, the king of Moab, he sent an adventurer called Ehud with "a present from Jehovah." The present turned out to be an eighteen-inch knife, which Ehud thrust into Eglon's belly; a part of the body on which the Whitechapel murderer is fond of experimenting. Jehovah's friend David, a man after his own heart, mutilated no less than four hundred men, and gave their foreskins to his wife as a dowry. Incurring Jehovah's displeasure and wishing to conciliate him, he attacked certain cities, captured their inhabitants, and cut them in pieces with saws, axes, and harrows.

Jehovah is particularly savage towards females. He cursed a woman for eating an apple, and instead of killing her on the spot, he determined to torture her every time she became a mother. A friend of his—and we judge people by their friends—cut a woman up into twelve pieces, and sent them to various addresses by parcels' delivery. Another of his friends, called Menahem, made a raid on a certain territory, and "all the women therein that were with child he *ripped up*." Jehovah himself, being angry with the people of Samaria, promised to slay them with the sword, dash their infants to pieces, and *rip up* their pregnant women. No doubt he fulfilled his promise, and he would scarcely have made it if he had not been accustomed to such atrocities. It appears to us, therefore, that he is fully entitled to the name of Jehovah the Ripper.

We have not exhausted our evidence. Far more could be adduced, but we hope this will suffice. It may, of course, be objected that Jehovah has reformed, that he is too old for midnight adventures, that he has lost his savage cunning, and that his son keeps a sharp eye on the aged assassin. But the ruling passion is never really conquered; it is even, as the proverb says, strong in death. We venture, therefore, to suggest that the Whitechapel murderer is Jehovah; and although keen eyes may detect a few superficial flaws in our theory—for what theory is perfect till it is demonstrated?—we protest that it marvellously covers the facts of the case, and is infinitely superior to any other theory that has hitherto been broached.

G. W. FOOTE.

"The mills of the god grind slowly." These mills were started before the world was in such a hurry, as it is now, and when it had a grinding monopoly. Now and improved machinery will soon be necessary.

SINNERS' DEATH-BEDS.

IT being, on the orthodox Christian theory, as impossible for anyone to live a good or a happy life without the hope of celestial bliss and the fear of infernal torments as it is to escape the day of judgment and the wrath to come, all sceptics and sinners are supposed to die in craven fear and apprehension of their impending doom. Unfortunately for this theory, facts are often perverse enough to contradict it. Savages are notoriously unconcerned at death, and some of the greatest scoundrels of civilisation have equally been noted for "dying game." Cartouche, the robber, and Baltshasar Gerard, the assassin of William the Silent, endured the torture with the utmost firmness, while to pious Dr. Johnson death was always an object of terror.

The Duc Du Plessis de Richelieu, grand-nephew of the cardinal, was one of the most notorious profligates of the last century. He cultivated every elegant vice, and was a paragon of unscrupulousness and debauchery. But good fortune ever attended him. He was made a member of the French Academy at the age of twenty-four, when he had written nothing but *billets-doux*. He was Marechal of France, rich, and courted like a king, and he terminated his disreputable existence at the age of ninety-two, sinking softly to rest as calmly as twilight fades into night. Poor William Cowper, the poet—one of the purest and tenderest of men, who never willingly wronged a human being or crushed a helpless worm—suffered during the greater portion of his life from severe paroxysms of religious despondency. On his sensitive soul the dreadful character of the Christian creed had its full effect. Terrified with the prospect of hell, his mind gave way, and, after lingering out a painful existence with but glimmering intervals of reason, he died in despair.

It is recorded of that vain, selfish, and bigoted sensualist, Louis XIV., that upon his death-bed he declared he "thought dying had been harder." Our own Charles II. was polite and merry to the last, and apologised to his courtiers for being "a most unconscionable time in dying."

The licentious Aratin having on his death-bed received extreme unction, called out to his friends: *Guardatemi da topi or che son cento*, "Preserve me from rats now I am greased." Sir Henry Morgan, the buccaneer, was another instance of an unrepentant sinner. The priests hoping to share in his booty, undertook to pilot him safely to heaven. But the old pirate could only think of his former scenes of daring. He boasted of prizes he had captured and even of the monks he had killed and the nuns he had violated. This was only taken as the confession necessary before receiving absolution and extreme unction. At length, when about to expire, the priest in due Catholic form held the gold crucifix before the dying sinner. His fading eyes brightened and seizing the cross he exclaimed, "Glorious plunder; cast it into the loot!" and throwing down the image of his redeemer, the old rascal gavo up the ghost.

This reminds us of our own Lancelot Blackburne, the buccaneer's chaplain who was made Archbishop of York for having married George I. to his mistress, the Duchess of Munster. As Archbishop, says Horace Walpole, "he retained nothing of his first profession except his seraglio." This worthy right reverend father in God was fond of the wine which is red and the story which is blue. He had been a few cruises with the buccaneers, shot his first lieutenant in a duel and a few other trifles, and died drunk.

Another of the old school of divines who united the worship of God with that of the flesh, if not of the devil, was the Abbé Terrasson. When his confessor came to his death-bed he said "Here is my housekeeper, Madame Luquet, confess her. It is absolutely the same thing." The confessor insisted on the abbé answering for himself. "Have you been luxurious?" asked he. "Madame Luquet, have I been luxurious?" said the dying man. "A little," replied his housekeeper. "A little," repeated the abbé, and the confessor, seeing himself mocked, abruptly departed, leaving the abbé to die, as he had lived, impenitent.

The lovely singer Sophie Arnould, whose full name, by the way, was Madeleine Sophie Arnould, when, after a gay and brilliant career she lay dying in 1803, naively said to the curé of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, who brought extreme unction, "Never mind! I shall be forgiven because like the Magdalene I have loved much."

This was not so bad as the Duke of Buckingham. Asked on his death-bed to send for a minister, he refused. Sect

after sect was mentioned, but he objected to them all. At length a Catholic priest was named, "No, no," said he, "they eat their God; but if you know a fellow who eats the devil you can send him." So much for some of the sinners. As for the Freethinkers and sceptics are they not written in the chronicles of *Infidel Death-Beds* by our editor?

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

LEVI RICHARD BARTLETT was hanged at Newgate on Tuesday morning for the murder of his wife, whose brains he battered in with a hammer while she was sleeping. He awoke at an early hour on his last morning, and had a pious interview with the chaplain, whom he thanked for his attentions. Then he made a hearty breakfast. After that interval for refreshment he had another turn with the chaplain, and at a quarter to eight the reverend gentleman accompanied him to the scaffold, reading the Burial Service on the way, though the man was still alive. After all this ghostly attention, we presume the murderer has gone to heaven; but if his wife happens to be there likewise, we should imagine that she will scarcely relish the society of the gentleman who smashed in her skull. It is to be hoped that, even in heaven, there is some means of shunning disagreeable acquaintances.

"RESIST not evil," said Jesus Christ, and this awkward text is explained away by the clergy who have plenty of relations in the army. But Count Tolstoi, whose thorough-going imitations of Christ we referred to last week, accepts this commandment literally. According to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who had a long talk with him on the subject, Count Tolstoi says that force must never be used in any circumstances. "You have no right," he says, "to use force even to restrain a drunkard from killing a child." Mr. Stead sees something divine in this doctrine, though he is not prepared to put it in practice himself; but, for our part, we consider it downright insanity. Jesus Christ or no Jesus Christ, Mr. Stead is not the man, nor we believe is Count Tolstoi the man, to stand still while a child's brains were being knocked out. The man who could do so might be very pious, but he would be very inhuman; or, if a good man, he would be too good for this world, and should hurry off to another world more worthy of his virtues.

Of course force is bad *per se*, though not in resistance to evil. When Alphonse Karr was asked if he would put down capital punishment, he replied, "Willingly, but let those gentlemen the murderers begin first." If they begin, other people are obliged to go on; and if drunkards interfere with children, they must be interfered with in their turn. A society which lost the instinct of self-protection might be very Christian, but it would soon perish, and it would deserve to perish.

When the Czar's train was smashed the only thing that received no damage was the "icon," a sacred picture of Jesus Christ. Very likely the Czar will henceforth regard it as a fetish and in all probability it will get a big reputation for working miracles.

THE *Rock* perceives that "Purgatory is a very mine of wealth for Rome, a perennial fountain which never goes dry." But the *Rock* does not perceive, or at least does not point out, that heaven and hell are mines of wealth for Protestants. That Protestant Christianity can dupe people out of huge sums of money by playing on their superstitious hopes and fears, is a sign of its divine origin and its eternal power. That Rome, by a further development of the same superstition, can get millions of money from the foolish and ignorant proves nothing but the wickedness and corruption of Roman Catholicism. Why cannot the Protestants see that precisely the same argument applies to their own form of religion?

ACCORDING to an American preacher, the young man's safeguards are:—(1) A regular and reliable means of support. (2) A wise choice of associations and companions. (3) Healthful amusement. (4) Companionship of good books. (5) Intimate acquaintance with the Bible. (6) Personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ." The first four safeguards are thoroughly Secular. Christ and the Bible are only dragged in at the fag end of the list, just to give the thing the necessary touch of piety. How the young man is to have "personal acquaintance" with a man who died eighteen hundred years ago is not explained.

ANOTHER clerical offence is reported from Northleach, Gloucestershire, where the Rev. Wallace Olive, curate of Daglingworth has been committed for trial on a charge of indecently assaulting a youth named Harrier at Brockhampton near Cheltenham.

JAMES PENNOCK, who murdered his wife at Pickering, Yorkshire, was an energetic member of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. He acted as one of the Sunday-school super-

intendents, and often officiated as a local preacher in the Pickering circuit.

THE *Christian at Work* prints a list of sensational topics announced by American preachers, and says they compare favorably with dime-novel titles. Here are a few of the sermon titles: "Boycotting the Dead," "The Great Oil," "Straight from the Shoulder," "Hell, and the People who are Going There," "Taken by the Throat," "Use Your Eyes," "Off goes the Roof," "Up comes the Man."

ACCORDING to an old Christian superstition, "a man can pray his enemy dead by repeating Psalm cix. every morning and evening for a year, but if he miss a day he must die himself." So virulent was this celebrated chapter of cursing felt to be.

ANOTHER superstition was that a knife must not be left lying edge upwards, for fear of cutting "the angels." This reminds one of St. Paul's inspired superstition that women ought to have their heads covered "because of the angels."

THE Abbé Crozes, who has recently died, had the distinction of conducting to the scaffold over a hundred eminent murderers. As he furnished them with their passports for heaven, they ought to be the first to welcome him on his arrival. Perhaps he will prefer to go to the other place to avoid their company. To colonise heaven with such gems of humanity may be all very well as a matter of business, or of form, but to associate with them in reality and for ever is quite another thing.

THE church of St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, Doctor's Commons, is in a disgraceful condition. Foul smells permeate the building to the annoyance of the congregation. The rotten flooring has been taken up and the odors are found to arise from the earth on which it rested. The soil is full of human bones. The church has been used as a burial-place, and hundreds of bodies were thrown there during the great plague in 1665. The decayed flooring is to be removed, and concrete is to be substituted. A similar investigation into the affairs of the Church at large would reveal similar rottenness and hidden corruption. The reform in this case, however, cannot be accomplished quite so easily.

SPURGEON is asking his congregation to pray for him, as he is so unwell that he cannot start for Mentone, where the Lord hears his prayers for recovery so much better than in England. He is suffering severe pain. The malady affects his knee-joint, and to crown all, he says, "the face and jaws have joined in the general chorus of pain." He still holds, however, that "sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotion," so that he must hold them to be good things, although he is so anxious to get rid of them by prayers and by removal to a warmer climate. Spiritual promotion is somehow less desirable than bodily comfort, even to the saintliest aspirant for spiritual blessings.

CANON JAYNE, in laying the foundation stone of a recreation club and gymnasium at Leeds, declared that Christ would certainly sanction a building like this, because when Christ came upon earth he took to himself the whole of our life. He took its lighter hours, its leisure recreations, all its parts, and made them parts of himself, and there was no part of life that Christ in and through his Church did not take an interest in. We should like to see J. C. sanctifying the wooden horse by vaulting over it with his petticoats tucked up, like a Bluecoat School boy; or Peter climbing the pole, and Paul doing the "splits," while the rest of the apostles go swinging round the "giant-strides." J. C. and Peter with the boxing-gloves on would be a still more interesting sight.

TALMAGE'S nephew James has been found guilty of murdering a telegraph operator at Brunswick, Mo.

MR. SAUNDERS, a county magistrate for Hertfordshire, died very suddenly in Bayford Church on Sunday morning. He fell to the ground while the psalms were being sung. The prayer for preservation from sudden death, which is put up in churches every Sunday, seems to have no effect whatever. The Lord kills people in church with heart disease just as readily as he does elsewhere.

ARCHDEACON DENISON is convening a meeting of persons to protest against the prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln for Ritualistic practices. Why doesn't he demand perfect freedom for his brethren by disestablishment? They could then do as they like. But the clergy are too covetous to obtain freedom by the sacrifice of the loaves and fishes of State pay, although they kick against the "embittering and aggravating" result of State control.

"It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."—Gen. vi., 6:—

Grieved him that he made man! Dear me!

Who first implanted evil?

Why is it we don't hear that he

Grieved that he made the Devil?

AN Englishman was lately inspecting the superstitious curiosities of a Roman Catholic cathedral. The sacristan showed him in a jewelled case with glass top a couple of small bones attached at one end, which, he said, were two of the fingers of the Holy Ghost. The Englishman looked sceptical. "You doubt their genuineness," said the sacristan, disgusted. "It isn't so much that," replied the other, "but I think you've made a mistake about the organ. I guess these are really the remains of the merry thought."

THE *Christian Herald* has a picture of a woman who during a removal is carrying a framed text, which she is showing to a passing carter, who is subsequently led to Christ by its means. The text is the woman's great treasure and consolation, and the precious words are these:—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." Perhaps this is the principle on which Jack the Ripper works. Why should so horrible and immoral an idea be glorified in this fashion? What is the possible connection between bloodshed and purity of life? The Christian has progressed so far that he agrees that shedding the blood of goats or cows does not wash away one's sins as the Old Testament teaches, but he still accepts the development of this savage belief—the Christian dogma which washes away crimes by the blood of a man who was God. The prevalence of such ideas shows that we are still but savages covered with a thin varnish of civilisation and morality.

SINCE the Jews crucified Jesus Christ—if they ever did so—they have been the mark for every kind of Christian insult. Their experience of that blessed virtue which is known as "Christian charity" has been one of the most terrible suffering and oppression. Formerly the Jews were robbed, outraged, tortured and murdered; but now humanity has come to their relief they are only "converted." Your ordinary Christian cannot believe in an honest Jew; he fancies that every gentleman of the Hebrew persuasion is a Christian at heart, and will not admit it out of sheer "cussedness." He therefore subscribes for the reclamation of these hypocrites. Thousands of pounds are collected yearly for the purpose, and a nice little swarm of proselytisers fatten on the spoil. They manage to convert a handful of Jews—one for each finger—at a cost of something like £7,000 per soul, so that the capitalised value of the Jewish race, at this rate, would exceed the total wealth of the globe.

THERE are signs that this converting business is decaying. The Bishop of Salisbury has been giving it a lift. His begging speech has elicited a reply from the Rev. S. Singer, a Jewish rabbi, who tells the Bishop that "movements of this kind are the laughing-stock of Jews." He asks the Bishop the following pertinent question:—"For the tens of thousands of pounds spent annually by the various organisations in the British Empire for the conversion of the Hebrew, what is there to show but a handful of poverty-stricken immigrants, with weak principles and strong appetites, and a number of 'Hebrew Christian' clergymen, whose change of faith has been attended with a distinct improvement in their social and material condition?"

THE *Christian Herald* gives an account of "rain sent in answer to prayer." The Rev. Gerhardt, Moravian missionary of Surinam, South America, describes how a drought continued to increase in spite of prayers at all their gatherings. As matters were getting serious a special week of prayer was then ordered, and before the end of this week the Lord graciously heard their pleading and sent some rain. By "this striking answer to prayer" he strengthened the missionary's faith, and stopped the mouths of those "so-called enlightened persons" who ridiculed the idea of praying for rain. As fresh prayers would have gone on until rain came they were bound to be successful in the end, and the Lord would take the credit, the months of unsuccessful prayers being immediately forgotten. A continuous repetition of the Lord's Prayer backwards would be equally efficacious.

STEWART HEADLAM will never be able to reconcile the Church and the stage, though we have no doubt he will find many curates ready to smoke a cigar and watch "the beauty of the ballet." There is an old and natural feud, in every sense of the phrase, between the pulpit and the pit. Actors in gospel-shops look with professional jealousy on actors in playhouses. Down at Reading, Mr. Frank Attwells, the lessee of the Royal County Theatre, invited the Green Girls and the Bluecoat Boys to witness the performance of "Little Lord Fauntleroy." Canon Garry was polite enough to thank him for the invitation but could not think of "bringing the girls"; and the head of the other establishment could not think of letting the boys "attend theatrical performances."

IT appears from the New York papers that Mrs. Fox Kane, one of the original Fox sisters who started the spiritist craze, has shown that the famous Rochester rappings were produced by sharp cracking of the big toe joints of herself and her sister Kate.

THE Congo Free State has decided to prohibit the importation of spirits, firearms and gunpowder. If it also keeps out the Bible and the missionaries it will be a model state.

THE Rev. Mr. Long, of Trinity Church, Charlton, is alive to the fact that the old style of sermon won't do for the present age. He finds that the Board Schools have made a difference, and he thinks that the clergy will have to teach science. If they try it, however, there will be a frightful increase of lunacy. Still, we agree with Mr. Long that parents should not send their children to church to crack nuts, especially as some of them could give him nuts to crack if he would only allow them to ask him questions about Jonah's whale, Balaam's ass, and other Bible wonders.

LIKING to see the best our opponents can say, we turned with uncommon interest to a review of Mr. H. Lea's *History of the Inquisition in the Catholic Tablet*. The defence of the Inquisition was by no means novel. It amounts to this. The Albigenses were not really Christians at all; like the Cathari they were a kind of new Manicheans worshipping both God and the Devil, and not clearly distinguishing the one from the other. They threatened the very existence of Christianity, and this, in the eyes of the *Tablet* was "a full justification for Innocent III. taking prompt measures" to suppress them. This ingenious attempt to alienate the sympathies of Protestants by blackening the heretics who have none left to defend them will not do for humanity at the present day. It is a poor excuse for torture and murder to say that the victims were heathens.

A gruesome Russian story is going the round of the press. It appears that a peasant's wife was thought to be dead. She was laid in a coffin and put into the grave, but when her friends departed she awoke from her comatose sleep and cried out for assistance. The grave-digger hurried off to the husband, who was surrounded with guests drinking to the memory of the deceased. The company discussed the subject and came to the conclusion that an evil spirit had taken possession of the dead woman's corpse and that, to prevent her walking at night, it was necessary to drive a stake through her body. But before they could perform this horrid rite the poor creature was suffocated in the coffin.

ONE of the Pope's Irish in America having claimed that the Irishmen enlisted in the American Civil War outnumbered all the other foreigners, official figures have been published showing that while of Irish there were but 7.14 per cent.; of Germans there were 8.76 per cent., while more remarkable still 78 per cent. of the deserters were Irish Catholics, while the Germans, who are known as a nation of Freethinkers, only furnished 9 per cent. of the deserters.

LONG ODDS.

O parson, platitudinous and poky,
Forever preaching of the "Prince of Peace,"
Or Sheol, wonderfully hot and smoky,
Oh, will you ever give us brief surcease?
You prate of things you designate as "holy,"
Or else, when not in "reverential calm,"
You give us hell, not calmly, sir, and slowly,
But fierce as roars that place of wild alarm!
Than with the "Prince of Peace," who brought a sword—
How strange—you much prefer to deal at length
With Sheol, serving it red hot, the word
Of him styled "Savior," not replete with strength.
That you intend to frighten us to heaven,
The odds are great, say twenty-five to seven.

SI SLOKUM.

IN an article on Queen Elizabeth, Mr. Gladstone speaks of an "essential requisite of the national character—that, namely, which was represented and fostered by Puritanism, and to which we owe it that the doctrine of non-resistance, the birth-sin of the English Reformation and the plague-spot of the Church of England, did not undermine and absorb the political liberties of the nation." Mr. Gladstone upholds Christ's teaching, "Resist not evil," as divine, and he at the same time holds that this "doctrine of non-resistance" is a ruinous sin and plague-spot. As a Christian, he nominally upholds the doctrine which as a practical man he denounces and defies. It is by such stultification of the intellect that the professors of religion get over their little difficulties in the way of believing opposites.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* exposes the falsehoods by which religious papers obtain advertisements. One "religious family journal" publishes a certified statement of its circulation, but takes good care not to inform its readers that this certified statement was obtained ten years ago and under altogether exceptional circumstances. It is well known that the real circulation is not probably half that indicated by the figures given. "Other Christian journals," it seems, are "put down as having a circulation of nearly eight times as many as they really have." We quite agree with the *Christian Commonwealth* that all this is "utterly indefensible." But if the *Christian* journals are so dishonest and untruthful whence is reform to come? If the salt of the earth hath lost its savor, whence shall the true salt be obtained? Will the Christians look to Secularism or the secular press for the example of honesty which shall spread in time to the Christians who boast so loudly of their high moral tone?

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, November 18, Southsea Hall, St. Paul's Square, Southsea: at 11, "Bible Morality: a Reply to the Royal Commission on Education;" at 3, "Plain Truth about Jesus Christ;" at 7, "After Death—What?"

Nov. 25, Birmingham.

Dec. 2 and 9, Hall of Science; 16, Manchester; 23, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct 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.

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.

No. 12.—Pleased to hear from you. Glad to hear you find the *Freethinker* and our other publications so useful for propaganda. There is a great work to be done privately as well as publicly. Freethinkers should lose no opportunity of spreading our literature among their friends and acquaintances.

J. GATES (India).—Your subscription to the *Freethinker* is paid up to Dec. 29, 1889. When Mr. Foote's photograph is on sale you will see it advertised on our last page.

C. K. LAPORTE.—Pleased to learn that your Hebrew friend thinks the *Freethinker* "is improving every week." We do not see the use of parading Hebrew type in an English journal. Our object is to instruct our readers, not to display the learning of our contributors. From time to time, however, a little Hebrew type has been used when it seemed necessary. You should recommend your friend to read the *Jewish Life of Christ*.

W. T. LEEKEY.—The first matter is private. For the second see "Acid Drops."

INVICTA sends 2s. 6d. for the London Secular Federation, and 2s. 6d. for the School Board Election Fund.

G. V. and H. P. send 6d. each for the School Board fight.

HENRY PORTER, Goxhill, Lincolnshire, will be glad to receive any Freethought tracts or pamphlets for distribution in that district.

H. M. C.—Not a bad joke, but we bar puns in this column.

H. M. RIDGWAY.—We put your 10s. to the School Board Election Fund. A packet of Mr. Bland's address has been sent you. We hope similar applications will come from scores of Freethinkers in the Finsbury division. It is impossible to canvas so huge a constituency. We trust you will be able to induce many of your friends and neighbors to "plump for Bland."

W. C. SAVILLE.—Shall appear.

JAMES NEATE writes that the Bethnal Green Branch is getting up a testimonial for Mr. Dent, who is well known in the East End as a Freethought propagandist. Subscriptions are being received by Mr. Neate at 385 Bethnal Green Road, E.

J. LYNN sends 2s. 6d. for the School Board Election Fund.

J. MILES.—See Numbers xxv., 7, 8.

V. HARDWICK.—Jokes are always welcome.

F. ATTWELLS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. PENNACK.—We presume you mean Dante's *Vision*. Cary's translation is published at 1s. 6d. by Routledge.

T. HUSBAND who is now a regular subscriber of the *Freethinker*, says he would never have become so if his eye had not been attracted by the illustration.

H. SHAW.—Your subscription expires on Dec. 30. We note your view of the illustrations.

WALTER MORICE.—We dealt last week with Mr. Spurgeon's letter. We suppose after subscribing himself "Yours from the Furnace" he will have to write "Yours from the Cinders."

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE EDUCATION STRUGGLE.
(SPECIAL.)

Monday, November 26, will decide the fate of our Secular candidates for the London School Board. Mrs. Besant is making a gallant fight on her own hand in the Tower Hamlets, and we hope she will be successful. She has a goodly band of assistants from all parts of London. This is as it should be, but a few who have gone from Finsbury would have done better to look after their own division.

Mr. Bland is contesting Finsbury under the auspices of the London Secular Federation. His address to the electors is one of the best we ever read. He makes a great point of secular education, and on that he will stand or fall.

Mr. Foote took the chair at Mr. Bland's first meeting in the Banner Street Hall, St. Luke's, on Monday evening. Despite the heavy rain there was a very fair attendance. Mr. Bland's speech was excellent and he made a first-rate impression on the audience. The vote of confidence in him was moved by Mr. G. Standing, seconded by Mr. R. O. Smith, supported by Mr. W. Clark and Mr. G. B. Shaw, and carried unanimously.

After the meeting several persons stopped and joined the working committee. One great desideratum is the wide dis-

tribution of Mr. Bland's address. Every Freethinker in the division who can circulate a few should write to Mr. G. Standing, 7, Finsbury Street, E.C., who will be happy to forward them post free. The time for fighting is now short, and every Freethinker worthy of the name should do something, however little, for the success of the only "secular" candidate in the Finsbury division. Mr. Bland is dead against the Bible as a school book, and he is entitled to *six votes* from all the Secularists on the Finsbury register.

Before the date of this number of the *Freethinker*, but after it reaches its London readers, a meeting will be held at Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville, on Friday evening, November 16. Mr. G. Standing will preside. Mr. Bland cannot attend as there is a club on the premises, but Mrs. Bland will deliver an address on Secular Education. Mrs. Bland is a graceful poetess, full of sympathy with popular causes. Mr. Foote will also address the meeting. We appeal to our North London friends to give the lady a full meeting and a good reception.

"Plump for Ellis" is the proper watch-word in West Lambeth. Mr. Ellis is the only "secular" candidate in that division, and he is standing under the auspices of the London Secular Federation. Mrs. Ashton Dilke is a very estimable lady, but we fail to see why any Freethinker should violate his principles to vote for her. She goes in for "the compromise," stands up for "unsectarian religious teaching," and is for keeping the Bible as a school book. Every vote given to her by Freethinkers is worse than wasted. They should all give Mr. Ellis their *six votes*, and induce as many of their friends as possible to do the same. One sterling "secular" candidate is worth a dozen "unsectarian" trimmers.

Mr. Foote presided at Mr. Ellis's first meeting in the George Street School-room, Lambeth Walk, on Friday, November 9. Mr. Ellis was well received. His speech gave great satisfaction, and a vote of confidence was carried without a single dissident. Mrs. Mary Sowden and Mr. J. M. Robertson also addressed the meeting.

As we go to press (Wednesday) a meeting is being held at Battersea in the Park Town Hall, Mr. Foote and Mrs. Sowden supporting Mr. Ellis on the platform. Another meeting will be held on Monday in the Stanley Hall, Cairns Road, Battersea Rise. Mr. Foote as well as Mr. Ellis will be present. Freethinkers in the neighborhood should do their utmost to secure a big meeting.

And now for finance. More money is needed. We rely on the London Freethinkers doing their utmost to furnish the sinews of war. Up to the present a large part of the subscriptions received has come from the provinces.

Here is a list "to encourage the others." Mr. R. O. Smith, the Federation treasurer, 142 Old Street, E.C., asks us to acknowledge the following:—W. J. Rendell, 3s. 6d.; Bethnal Green Branch (collection), 17s.; Camberwell Branch (collection), £2 0s. 6d.; Hyde Park Branch (collection), £1 6s. 2½d.; W. Jackson, 1s.; Dick Edwards, 10s. 6d.; North London Branch (collection), 6s.; Finsbury Branch (collection), 2s. 6d.; N.S.S. Executive, £5; W. Hunt, 5s.; T. W., 5s.; C. S., 1s.; J. C. Swinburne-Hanham, £1; W. B. Jameson, £1 1s.; A. Pomeroy, 5s.; W. Rayment, 1s.; G. R. £1; E. Truelove, £1.

We have received one or two small sums direct. They are acknowledged in the Correspondence column. Our concluding word is this: The thoroughness of the fight now depends on the finances.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Middlesborough Branch is making headway. Mr. Foote's lectures on Sunday in the Co-operative Hall were well attended. There was a little weak opposition, but the great majority of the audience was in sympathy with the lecturer. The evening discourse, "An Hour in Hell," was especially relished, though its "blasphemous" title gave offence to the local bigots. A very brisk sale of the *Freethinker* gave promise of an extended circulation in the town. We wish the Branch all success. If it keeps pegging away, to use Lincoln's phrase, it will make a decided impression on Middlesborough.

Mr. Bradlaugh must feel greatly relieved by the generous subscription he lately received. His friends, however, will regret to learn that his health is disordered by overwork. His throat is so much affected that he was unable to lecture at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening, and we understand that he has been obliged to cancel all engagements up to Christmas.

MRS. BESANT is addressing an open-air meeting in Victoria Park this afternoon (Nov. 18) in promotion of her candidature for the London School Board. Freethinkers—especially sturdy ones—should get near the platform as some rough opposition is

expected. Edwards, the black preacher, is going to lecture on "Mrs. Besant's *Law of Population*," and although the black servant of Christ is not likely to imperil his own ebony image, some of his white followers have quite an Irish taste for shindies.

THE Rev. S. D. Headlam is contesting Hackney and hopes to become a member for the London School Board. He has sent us a copy of his address. It contains points which, in our opinion, have no practical relation to the present struggle. But Mr. Headlam goes for "Secular Education pure and simple." He says that "the time now devoted to Bible lessons might be much better spent." We agree with this, though for a different reason; and we hope Mr. Headlam will get the Freethought vote in the part of Hackney which he is canvassing.

WE are pleased to note activity in regard to the provincial School Board elections. At Leeds Mr. Greevz Fisher issues a bold address, at Portsmouth Mr. Brumage's friends are confident of victory, and at other large towns our friends have a good prospect. The Liverpool *Porcupine* has a capital article entitled "Out with the Parsons," and an excellent letter appears in the *Bristol Mercury* from Mr. T. A. Williams.

MR. ALFRED BEVAN is fighting for a seat on the Birmingham School Board. His address is severe on priestcraft and the "Beer and Bible party." He is in favor of purely secular education. We know nothing of Mr. Bevan personally; but, other things being equal, his address should recommend him to Birmingham Freethinkers.

INGERSOLL'S *Reply to Gladstone* is still selling, though now, of course, moderately. We advertised it extensively at first in a number of newspapers and literary journals in order to introduce such a splendid Freethought pamphlet to the general public. But we were obliged to draw in our horns to avoid an absolute loss.

FANCYING there was an enormous sale for Ingersoll's pamphlets, an enterprising Malthusian bookseller resolved to print a cheaper edition. Hearing of his intention, we wrote to him twice, pointing out the inconvenience, though admitting his legal right. He vouchsafed no reply, however, and by-and-bye his edition was printed. Then he coolly sent to us for the price of an advertisement in the *Freethinker*, and his letter went unanswered. Strangely, however, he calls this "boycotting," and we hear he is preparing a circular to that effect for the N.S.S. Branches. Well, we have saved him the trouble.

HAVING gone so far, we will go farther, and state our *real* reasons for declining to assist this gentleman in selling his pamphlet. First, it is villainously printed on wretched paper, and it is an insult to Ingersoll to put him before the public in such a dress. Secondly—and this is far worse—the back page is covered with advertisements of anti-population literature, not a single Freethought work being included; and the reader is therefore left to the impression that such is the literature which readers of Ingersoll devour. Now we, for our part, have no objection to Malthusian literature, and we have advertised some of this gentleman's wares before now. But Ingersoll is well known to have a very strong distaste for at least some of this class of publications. Of course he may be right or wrong, but a gentleman would respect his taste. It seems monstrous to trade on Ingersoll's reputation in order to promote the sale of publications he detests. Nothing would annoy Ingersoll more than to see his pamphlet plastered with announcements about the science—or is it the art?—of "borning" good babies. The "boycotted" gentleman now knows why he is "boycotted."

THE *New York World* reports that a handsome offer has been made to Col. R. G. Ingersoll, by a foreign manager, to deliver a course of forty lectures in Europe next spring. The *World* does not report whether the offer has been accepted or declined.

GENERAL HARRISON, the new President of the United States, is a descendant of Commissioner Harrison who signed the death warrant of Charles I. and was executed at the Restoration. Miss Endicott, whom Mr. Chamberlain is about to marry, is a descendant of John Endicott, who as Governor of Massachusetts bitterly persecuted the Quakers in the days of Cromwell. Times have changed. America has won her freedom as a Republic, and Miss Endicott marries a statesman who would exclude the Bible from all State schools and disestablish all forms of religion.

DR. R. B. WESTBROOK, the recently elected President of the American Secular Union, was at one time a Presbyterian minister and was for seven years, from 1854, the Secretary of the American Sunday School Union. Upon retiring from the church he took to the bar, and was in 1869 admitted as attorney and counsellor in the Supreme Court at Washington. In 1882 he published, *The Bible—Whence and What*, and in 1884, *Man—Whence and Whither*. He has recently written a work drawing attention to the violation of the will of Stephen Girard the Freethinker, who left an immense sum to found an orphanage at Philadelphia on the condition that no religious training should be given.

THE prosecution of M. Lennstrand, the President of the Swedish Utilitarian Society, and of Mr. Alfred Linguist, the vice-president, for declaring that dogmatic religion is unreasonable, has drawn some attention to the Freethought movement in Sweden, and "Utilitarian" Societies have been established in several parts. We trust to learn that the sentences of three months' imprisonment against M. Lennstrand and of one month's imprisonment against M. Linguist have been quashed upon appeal; but in any case our sympathy is with our Swedish comrades. The persecution of Freethought has everywhere led to its promulgation, and no doubt it will prove so in Sweden.

SIR MOUNTSTUART E. GRANT DUFF, in his account of his "Winter in Syria" in the *Contemporary Review*, observes that "the followers of Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, with the full sanction of Elisha, committed against the Moabites precisely the same atrocities which Mesha [on the Moabite stone] boasts to have committed against his enemies, and there are probably still millions of excellent persons who would tell us that the one set of atrocities which were committed in the name of one tribal god were perfectly wrong, but the other perfectly right—simply because, ages and ages afterwards, the name of the latter tribal god became identified with the name of the One Supreme God."

In his last essays, just published, the late Matthew Arnold gives his opinion that "most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry."

In the current number of the *Fortnightly Review* Mr. Frederic Harrison gives the following interesting little autobiographical extract. He says: "I was myself brought up as an orthodox Churchman, in a religious home, with unusual attention to a Christian education. Till manhood I was accustomed to continual study of the Bible, of ecclesiastical history, biography and exposition; to daily prayer, constant communion, and to familiarity with all great books of sacred poetry and prose. I assimilated all this with the whole mind and the whole heart; nor do I suppose that there was any part of the ordinary Christian hopes and fears which I did not experience, or which I was unable to feel. As I came to manhood it slowly dawned upon me that the whole dogmatic basis of belief on which this religious frame of mind once rested had melted away as imperceptibly as the sunset melts out of the western sky. I woke up to find that the whole of my religious sentiments, habits and consolations had been built upon a vast substructure of gratuitous assumptions, without a vestige of solid proof." Mr. Harrison had been reading Comte, and it was Comte who led him to a better faith, the Religion of Humanity.

MR. and MRS. DAVID WOFFENDEN, the veteran booksellers and newsagents of Lockwood, have been celebrating their golden wedding. About three hundred friends assembled in the Trades' Societies Club, Huddersfield, to do honor to the aged pair who were for a long time the only persons from whom advanced literature could be procured.

SOME of the advanced Freethinkers of Paris have started a new lithographed journal. It is entitled *Le Danton*, and is edited by Achille Boulogne, Sigward, and C. Cilwa. We wish our contemporary all success.

A MISSIONARY letter from Mysore, India, printed in this month's *Joyful News*, says, in very queer English, "Many who have been convinced that their religion is false have come to the conclusion that all religions are the same, and so have become Atheists. We are not the only missionaries in India. Infidel lecturers are busy." Joyful news, indeed!

MORE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS.

THE lessons on the incidents of the conquest of Canaan are continued in the *Christian Commonwealth*. One lesson is on "Caleb's inheritance," the said "inheritance" being the town of Hebron, which was "inherited" by the summary process described in Joshua x. 36, 37:—

"And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it: and they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that were therein."

The Bible is sometimes good at euphemisms for crime. Theft accompanied by wholesale murder needs a prettier name to sweeten it. "Convey," the wise it call; "Annex," we moderns style it. But with Bible believers plundered property is an "inheritance." Thus children are taught honesty and truthfulness in one.

The children are told of Caleb's good qualities and deeds. They are to admire his seven years spent in the tumults of war, and his ability and willingness as a soldier to carry out his orders—which were among the most

infamous ever given. He was so brave that "he was fully prepared to drive the enemy from the property to which he laid claim"—which is exactly the case of some of the worst plunderers and devastators that ever breathed. His marvellous strength in thus doing his duty must be connected with his "calm trust in God."

Somehow, Caleb's successful massacres and thefts lead the Sunday-school teacher to observe that "Any student of history will have discovered that though sometimes the violent and unbelieving ones seem to have a monopoly of possession, yet eventually the land and its fruits fall to quite different souls." Yes, the violent and unbelieving ones who display their violence by defending their homes and wives and children from ruthless invaders are, in the story, eventually displaced by the peaceful believers who assail them without the slightest excuse and slaughter every living soul. Surely there is no limit to the Christian stupidity which can read black into white in this senseless fashion.

The children are to "enumerate" the "title deeds" which Caleb had—the only claim being the promise of Moses, who had no more shadow of right to give the town away than I have to give the city of Rome to Mr. Spurgeon on condition that he massacres every living soul in the place. Yet the scholars are to see in Caleb's "privileges" a type of the still greater privileges enjoyed by them as Christians, and they are told that "It is better to store our mind with images of such than with the figures of fictitious 'heroes.'"

The succeeding lesson is on "Helping one another (Josh. xxi., 43—45; xxii., 1-9)," and a "Golden Text" is given which says "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. vi., 2)." But the help given was that of the two and a half tribes to their brethren in slaughtering the rightful owners of the land. The Sunday-school teacher is to persuade the scholars that this is bearing one another's burdens in the proper Christian fashion. The tribes are commended for the hearty and "very practical" character of the help they rendered, and the children are shown that their Christian helpfulness in bearing other people's burdens by wholesale murder "met with gratifying reward" in the shape of "very much cattle" and silver and gold and iron and brass and "very much raiment." The assistant murderers have been nobly and generously using their powers "in the service of others." They have been using their own candle to light the candles of those about them and have thus made more bright their own surroundings. In giving light they have received light.

If the children were to accept the lessons thus taught they would help bullies to maltreat those weaker than themselves, they would help comrades to plunder hen-roosts, orchards or shop-tills, they would even hope some day to bear the burdens of the various heroes of the *Police News*—and in so doing they would persuade themselves they were bearing one another's burdens as followers of Jesus Christ.

The writer of the lessons is a married lady, who according to an announcement in the *Christian Commonwealth*, was recently a mother. What would she say if a party of thoroughly orthodox Cossacks burst into her room and slew her infant before her eyes on the plea that they were bearing one another's burden as Christians by helping each other to seize England as an "inheritance" given unto them of the Lord? Would she not see the very deepest depths of hypocritical pretence or of atrocious self-delusion in such an excuse? Why then should it serve for God's chosen ruffians, unless indeed morality is to be utterly trampled under foot by religion?

The lady indeed has the grace to own in the introduction to this lesson on helping one another (perhaps after reading a copy of the *Freethinker*, which I sent to the Editor of the *C. C.*) that—

"It cannot be denied—and, perhaps, it is better to admit—that the Old Testament contains very much with which the Christian cannot feel himself in sympathy. This is especially the case with regard to the wars and wholesale slaughters which characterised the Jewish conquest of Canaan. The man who aims to *love his neighbor as himself*, who recognises that the Father above causes His sun to shine upon the *evil and the good*, will recoil from the narratives of bloodshed which spared neither woman nor child, as we have them recorded in the sacred pages."

But except in this confession, her lessons are utterly innocent throughout of any such idea or suggestion—which still remains unassimilated and utterly foreign to the whole

style of their thought and teaching. She defends her subject by declaring that "here and there we come upon some incident which breathes the Gospel spirit—some story of effort on behalf of others, of self denial, of protection afforded to the weak"; and her present lesson on the way in which the perpetrators of awful deeds helped each other deals with just "such an incident" of self-denial and protection of the weak in the approved Gospel fashion.

Such curious blindness of perception, such sophisticated perversion of the simplest elements of morality, accompanied by really the very best of intentions and an utterly illogical and unsuitable superstructure of moral lessons, would be amusing were it not lamentable. But while we Freethinkers see the folly and the wickedness of the consecration of crime, we must remember that the children are not emancipated. They see things very differently, and are at the mercy of those who form the juvenile mind and bend the twig ere it grows into the warped and unalterable tree.

W. P. BALL.

JEHOVAH WARNS US.

There's a region incandescent
Down below;

Where sulphureous, incandescent
Breezes blow.

There are heaps and heaps of coals
To consume blaspheming souls,
Who incessantly in shoals,
Downward go.

There's a troop of devils grim
Down below;
Through the flames they scoot and skim,
High and low:
They howl, and never tire
Of piling on the fire,
Though they constantly perspire,
Puff, and blow.

They are armed with pitchforks horrid,
As you know;
Frightful horns from ev'ry forehead*
Sprout and grow.
They have sharpish claws of steel,
Which the howling victims feel,
As around the devils wheel,
In a row.

There's a boss whose name is Nick
Down below;
He was sent there by a kick
From my toe:
Though he ought to be calcined,
Yet he doesn't seem to mind—
He got used to it, I find—
Long ago.

He's the prince of perfect stokers
Down below;
You should see him work the pokers
To and fro.
He can roast the fattest folk
With an ounce or two of coke,
While he bellows forth this joke—
"Have some snow?"

Gentle people—*must* I chuck you
Down below?
If the Savior hasn't ducked you
White as snow—
If the Bible you despise—
If you won't believe my lies
(Though prodigious their size)—
Down you'll go!

EX-RITUALIST.

PROFANE JOKES.

He was fond of singing revival hymns, and his wife named the baby Fort so that he should hold it.

A Highlander on his death-bed said to the minister, "Will there be any whisky in heaven?" "Oh, no, Donald, there will be no occasion for it." "Oh, weel, if there's no occasion it would be but decent to have it on the table."

"Madam, you are on the high road to the Devil's headquarters," said Booth to a woman who had a silk dress on, and she answered—"Then we shall probably meet again, sir." At which the "general" turned strawberry color.

A guileless old minister one day read out his sermon in church without noticing that his boys had glued together two of the pages. The astonished congregation accordingly heard that "When Noah was a hundred and twenty years old, he took unto himself a wife, who was" (here he turned over the page) "three hundred cubits longs, fifty cubits wide, built of gopher wood, and covered with pitch within and without."

* I call this "forrid."—Jehovah.

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