

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XIV.—No. 52.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1894.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS ?

(Continued from page 810.)

LET us first take Luke. There are many traditions about him which we are at liberty to disbelieve. He is said to have been a physician and also a painter; indeed, the Catholic Church, with its usual effrontery, exhibited pictures of the Virgin Mary pretendedly drawn by him, or at least as copies of his original paintings. According to one tradition, he suffered martyrdom; according to another tradition, he died a natural death at the age of eighty-four. His death occurred at several different places. His tomb was shown at Thebes in Bœotia, but travellers have found it a comparatively modern structure. The number of countries in which he is said to have preached the Gospel is a tribute to his prodigious and even preternatural activity. He is alleged to have been converted by Paul, of whom he became the constant companion; a view which is reflected in the Acts of the Apostles. It has even been maintained that he wrote the third Gospel at Paul's dictation. According to Irenæus, he digested into writing what Paul preached to the Gentiles. Gregory Nazianzen says that he wrote with the help of the great Apostle. All this, of course, is very precarious; but it is sufficient to show that Luke was not a personal follower of Jesus. He wrote down as much as he remembered of what Paul remembered of what other people had told him. His exordium puts him outside the category of eye-witnesses. He relates, not what he knew, but what was "most surely believed," on the testimony of those who handed down the information, and who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word." It is perfectly certain, therefore, that Luke could have had no first-hand knowledge of the supernatural birth of Christ. He merely recorded what was then the tradition of the Church, which is not adequate evidence to support a miracle, and one, indeed, so astounding that a famous old English divine, Dr. John Donne, declared that if God had not said so he would never have believed it.

The historical authority of the third Gospel is in a still worse plight if we accept the conclusion of the majority of modern critics, that it was not written by Luke, nor by any person living in the apostolic age, but is a production of the second century, and of unknown authorship. Who can credit a staggering miracle on the authority of a document written God alone knows exactly when, where, and by whom?

Let us now turn to Matthew. What the Gospels tell us about him is trifling. He was a Jew and a publican—that is, a tax-collector. On one occasion he entertained Jesus at dinner (Matt. ix. 10). And here endeth the story. All the rest that is told of Matthew is tradition. He was a vegetarian, he preached the Gospel extensively, he died a natural death, and he also suffered martyrdom. Even his martyrdom was ambiguous, for he was burnt alive and also beheaded. The earliest writers, such as Papias and Irenæus, say that he wrote the *logia*, or sayings, of Christ in Hebrew. But our first Gospel is a complete history, from the birth of Jesus to his ascension; it is also written in Greek, and by some one who was not conversant with the Hebrew language. Whatever may have been written by Matthew is universally allowed to have perished. But the orthodox have pretended that, before it was lost, it was translated into Greek, and thence again into Latin.

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They are unable to say, however, who made the translation, or even *when* it was made; nor can they tell us why the translation was preserved, and the inspired original allowed to sink in oblivion.

Matthew *may* have written something, but it is for ever lost to the world; nor is there the slightest evidence that our Greek gospel is a translation from it, but much evidence to the contrary. In the judgment of all competent critics, our first Gospel, like all the others, is not of apostolic origin. It cannot be traced back beyond the second half of the second century.

So much for the authorship and authority of Matthew and Luke. Now let us take them as they stand, and examine what they say.

Each of them gives a genealogy of Jesus, right up to Adam—a gentleman who never existed. There is a considerable difference, however, in the two genealogies; which proves that they were not derived from a well-kept family pedigree. They are doubtless as imaginary as the pedigrees made out at the Herald's Office for modern gentlemen who are knighted or ennobled.

As the Messiah was to be of the blood of David, and Joseph belonged to that "house," both Matthew and Luke trace the family descent through *him*. But if Jesus was *not* the son of Joseph, he was not really of the house of David, any more than Moses was of the house of Pharaoh.

It is extremely probable, as Strauss argues, that the genealogies of Jesus were compiled before our Gospels were written, at a time when the supernatural birth of Jesus was not entertained. He was then believed to be the lawful son of Joseph and Mary, and the genealogies were compiled to show his descent from David, which was requisite to his Messiahship.

Luke speaks of Jesus, in his genealogy, as "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph." This is a very eloquent parenthesis. As was supposed! By whom? Why, by the very persons who ought to know; by the countrymen, neighbors, and brothers of Jesus. They supposed him to be the son of Joseph, but they forsooth were mistaken, and their blunder was corrected long afterwards by a gentleman who was not even a Jew, and never lived in Palestine.

Having to represent Jesus as *not* the son of Joseph, but a child of supernatural birth, both Matthew and Luke give us circumstantial narratives of his entrance into the world. On some points they agree, on others they differ, and each relates many things which the other omits. Evidently they were working upon various sets of traditions. And just as evidently the whole of these birth-traditions were unknown to Mark and John, or considered by them as false or doubtful, and not worth recording.

Matthew starts with his genealogy, which Luke reserves till the end, and then plunges into the middle of his subject.

Now the birth of Jesus was in this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Wait a minute, Matthew! Not so fast! You, or any other man, can tell that a young woman is with child, but *by whom* is quite another matter. Let us see what you *know* on this subject. And for the sake of argument we will suppose you one of the twelve Apostles. As for Luke, he is out of court altogether; it being impossible for him to give more than hearsay, which no court of law would admit as evidence.

From the very nature of the case, Matthew could not have had any personal knowledge of who was the father of Jesus. Whether it was a man, or a ghost, or any other being, Matthew was not in a position to know more than he was told. Well then, who told him? Unluckily he does not inform us. We have therefore nothing to rely upon but his own authority, which (we repeat) from the very nature of the case is absolutely worthless.

No one has a right to say that Joseph told Matthew. Even if he did, he could only say that he was *not* the father of Jesus. He could not say who *was*. At least he could not say so with any certainty. Nor was it a matter on which he was likely to be loquacious.

It may be argued that Matthew derived his information from Jesus. But there is no evidence of this in the Gospels. Jesus never called attention to any miraculous circumstances in connection with his birth. Even if a private conversation be alleged, as at least possible, what is its value? Jesus himself was no authority on the subject. It is a wise child that knows its own father. How could Jesus be aware, except by report, of what occurred nine months before he was born? It may be objected that he was God, and, therefore, omniscient; but this is begging the very question in dispute. We must begin the argument with his manhood, and go on to his godhead afterwards, if the evidence justifies the proceeding. It will never do to bring in the conclusion to prove the premises.

The only person who knew for certain was Mary. Did *she* tell Matthew? It is not alleged that she did. According to Luke, Mary "kept all these things." She does not appear to have told even Joseph. Is it probable, then, that she told a third person?

Matthew states that Joseph, finding Mary as ladies wish to be who love their lords, before he had married her, and certainly without his assistance, was "minded to put her away privily." He did not like the look of affairs, and he "thought on these things." No doubt! We are not disposed to quarrel with this part of the narrative.

Joseph's brain could not stand much thinking. He was better at dreaming. It was in a dream that he was ordered to take his flight into Egypt, in a dream that he was told to return to Palestine, and in a dream that he was warned to avoid Judæa and go into Galilee.

How natural, then, that "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream," telling him to marry Mary, and informing him that the approaching little stranger was the progeny "of the Holy Ghost."

Joseph married Mary and fathered the child. Of course he walked by faith instead of sight, but the matter concerned him more than anyone else, and it was enough that he was satisfied.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

A RELIGION OF MONEY.

In the apocryphal appendix to the forged book of Daniel there is an instructive story of Bel and the Dragon. It tells how "the Babylonians had a great idol called Bel, and there was spent upon him every day twelve great measures of fine flour, and forty sheep, and six vessels of wine." The story tells the secret of the God's requisitions. "In the night came the priests with their wives and children, and did eat and drink up all." Daniel exposed the dodge, and it is no wonder the priests cut off this portion of the writings ascribed to him; for it makes us wonder what the Lord Jehovah wanted with a bullock and a lamb every morning, with twelve flour cakes, olive oil, salt and spice, and the fourth part of a hin of wine every day; and what became of the 240 oxen and 120,000 sheep which were sacrificed at the consecration of Solomon's temple?

The story has a moral for to-day as well as for the times of old. Those silly Babylonians only fed some seventy priests and their families. We support some thirty thousand. But all that is given to the shepherds is doubtless lent unto the Lord. Is it a good investment? The Church of England alone yearly consumes £5,753,557, and if to this be added the annual value of the residences of the bishops, deans, canons, and clergy, the total is

brought to seven millions. Of this vast sum only £234,380 is derived from private benefactions since 1703.

Look at the good billets in the Church. You will find they are nearly all the appanage of the privileged classes. A sporting nobleman, whose word was not good enough at Tattersall's, provided some dozen men of God with a living each. Social ties connect the aristocracy and the clergy, and the interests of parson and squire are usually so allied as to be almost identical. The interest of the rich in the Church, and the interest of the Church in retaining control over education, long has been, and still is, among the greatest drawbacks to social progress in England.

"Why did they sacrifice lambs?" asked Ingersoll, and he gave the reply, "Because the priests liked young mutton." So I ask, Why did they give up sacrifices? and answer, Because priests found they could do better with money than with offerings of food and drink. Christianity abolished sacrifices, but, under pretence of humility and devotion, it set up the religion of money. The cunning fetish man, who induces his superstitious fellows to give him yams under pretence of his familiarity with, and influence over, ghosts, has developed under Christianity to, the triple-crowned Pontiff, whose subsidies of Peter's Pence pour in upon him from all quarters of the globe, giving the prisoner of the Vatican an income equal to that of an emperor.

"The religions of the world," said Emerson, "are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men." It is a luminous saying. The founders contributed imagination, and the perpetuators combined it with cunning. The bulk contributed neither imagination nor experience, but simply ignorance, blind credulity, and fear—a sufficient field for the cunning rogue to work upon. He suggested to his victim that his dreams had a meaning; that there were ghosts who returned and haunted him; that storm and darkness and disease were the work of evil spirits; and, here his cunning came in, that he knew how to appease them by offerings, charms, magical spells, and the repetition of holy prayers, which he would employ, for a consideration. Here we may see, in simple shape, how cunning and self-interest may inspire both the faith and the forms of religion. The faith may be shared by the more imaginative medicine-man, but the forms he can only believe in because he too has not used his reason. Religion, as embodied in churches and ceremonies, is, then, no inherent or original necessity of human nature, but mainly a development of priestcraft. Toland was not so far out when he wrote:—

Natural Religion was easy, first, and plain;
Tales made it mystery, offerings made it gain.
Sacrifices and shows were at length prepared;
The priests ate roast meat, and the people stared.

This, it may be said, is a sordid view of human nature. What of the hopes and aspirations bound up with religion? Religion may have its foundations in the deepest wishes and emotions of the human mind, and yet it be no less true that it has been fostered by priestcraft. Man is a very complex being, and is often carried away by his own imagination. Self-interest often unconsciously underlies a deal of fine sentiment, and if anyone will squarely face the facts of religion they will find that the trinity of *£ s. d.* is the basis. Beneath all the fine pretences of humility the fact is, that religion has ever been allied with power and social respectability. The priests are, as ever, a caste drawn from the upper orders. They claim succession from the apostles, to whom Jesus promised: "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The laws against heresy, the old churches, cathedral, and abbey lands, everywhere taking up the best sites, tell the real tale. The legend is of humble fishermen, but the facts show ambitious priests. Christianity has a superficial aspect of benevolence, humility, and other-worldliness; but at bottom it is, with most of its professional professors, mainly a religion of money.

J. M. WHEELER

SOURCES OF RELIGION.—And in these four things—opinion of ghosts, ignorance of second causes, devotion towards what men fear, and taking of things casual for prognostics—consisteth the natural seeds of religion; which, by reason of the different fancies, judgments, and passions of several men, hath grown up into ceremonies so different that those who are used by one man are, for the most part, ridiculous to another.—*Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan."*

CHRIST AND CHRISTMAS.

WE have just passed through the festive season of Christmas, and the dawn of the New Year has arrived. Christmas is invariably a period when social sunshine abounds, and love and peace banish, at least for a time, discord and evil passions. It is a time when wrongs are forgotten, benevolence is stimulated, and affection cemented. The knowledge that so many of our fellow mortals in "Christian England" have been debarred through poverty from sharing in the annual merriment during the past week has doubtless marred, to a great extent, the pleasure that the sympathetic mind would otherwise have enjoyed. The contemplation of the injustice and misery around us should stimulate each and all to renewed efforts in their endeavors to secure a better order of things, whereby all members of the community shall be enabled to have their fair share in the comforts and happiness of life.

Many of the superstitions that were once associated with Christmas time have disappeared through the advancement of secular knowledge; but there is one that still remains in the Christian Church, and is at the present day believed in by the great majority of orthodox professors. We allude to the superstition that the keeping of Christmas as a holiday originated with the alleged birth of Christ. This is in no sense true, for long before the time assigned to the birth of Jesus the 25th of December was set apart to celebrate the birth of some particular god. Moreover, prior to Christ's time this date was observed in Rome as a day of games and rejoicings. Thus, ample historical evidence exists which clearly proves that the customs, ceremonies, and decorations now associated with Christmas are survivals of pagan times. To us it has always appeared very absurd to try to connect the two, Christ and Christmas. What harmony can possibly exist between the cross and plum pudding, a dying god and roast beef, or family joys and hell-fire? Even the manner in which professed Christians join in these annual jollifications is un-Christ-like. They celebrate the advent of the "Man of Sorrows" by indulging in the best things of this world that they can obtain, and in participating in the frivolous pleasures of the carnal mind. With their usual inconsistency, these followers of the "meek and lowly Jesus" ignore his advice "to lay not up treasures on earth," "to take no thought for their lives." Many of them have very anxious thoughts as to how they shall lay up treasures during the year, in order that at Christmas they may be jolly and have a good time, despite Christ's statements, "I am not of this world," and "Blessed are they that mourn."

Now, if the festivities of Christmas can be traced to Pagan origin, why may not their central figure—Christ—be traced to classical mythical sources? It need hardly be stated that the term "Christ" was never a proper name; it was only a title, a mark of distinction, and not what we should term the registered name of an individual. Moreover, theologians concede that the title is dependent upon the miraculous character of the person who bears it; also that the notion of the "virgin birth" was common in Pagan nations. Justin, in his *Apology*, refers to the Pagan Perseus being born of a virgin, thus showing that this idea did not originate with the Christian faith. No doubt the belief in the "virgin birth" of Jesus was considerably strengthened by either the misunderstanding or the wilful perversion of certain Old Testament stories. But, as Neander, in writing in defence of the Gospels, and referring to the early ages of Christianity, said: "At that time men were accustomed to find everywhere in the Old Testament predictions and types of Christ, whether warranted by the connection or not." As an example, he refers to Isaiah xxxiii. 16, and adds: "Nor indeed does the passage seem distinctly to refer to the Messiah." To deify Jesus places him on a level with the myths of other nations. Judging from the gospels of Matthew and Luke, it appears evident that it was intended to convey the impression that Jesus owed his birth to other than human causes; and this justifies us in placing the story among what we call historical myths. To regard the supposed founder of Christianity as an ordinary man is a very different thing from claiming him to be a supernatural being—"the anointed one."

The representations of "the Christ" that have come down to us in Christian literature would, without any

hesitation, if found in any other literature, be pronounced mythical. In these representations we have a man who is stated to have been born without a human father; who was at two places at the same time; who was alone while his friends were with him; who commanded the winds and waves to be still; who blighted a fig-tree because it did not bear fruit out of season; who brought the dead to life; who fasted for several weeks, and was then placed by the Devil "on a pinnacle of the temple," and afterwards taken by the same illustrious character "up into an exceeding high mountain," and was shown "all the kingdoms of the world"; who cast out hundreds of devils from human bodies; who rode into Jerusalem upon a colt and an ass at the same time; and who finally, after partaking of a meal of broiled fish, was "carried up into heaven." Now, surely these incidents are sufficient to prove to any matter-of-fact person that the Christian hero was no historical character. In connection with any other person such tales would be at once regarded as pure fiction.

Besides, it must be remembered that the "virgin birth" and deity of Christ were not regarded as established beliefs for many centuries, and what is the most notable of all is the record that "even his brethren believed not on him." Members of his own family who lived with him for thirty years, and, therefore, were more capable of judging of his doings than any others could possibly be, had no faith in the claims set up for him by his followers. Then there was his mother, Mary, who must have been aware of all that was to be known upon the matter; and yet, when the extraordinary mission of Jesus was referred to, we are told that "Joseph and Mary marvelled." Here we have the only person who could attest, if it were possible, the historical fact of the virgin birth, silent upon the subject; and we find her expressing surprise when his supernatural birth was hinted at. Further, in Luke ii. 48, Mary speaks of Joseph as the father of her son. The fact is, we have had "Lives of Christ" in abundance, but a true history of him has not been written, for the obvious reason that it has never been positively known who he was, what he was, and what he did. History, in its correct sense, is not made up of phantoms and silence, but of facts. The supernatural Christ has left no impress on the world outside of the Church, and even there he is known only in name. Hence, a distinction will remain between those who, beholding Christ in the mirror of Christian consciousness, adore him as a God, and those who see in Jesus nothing but those qualities which are to be found generally in mankind.

The Christmas of 1894 has come and gone, leaving behind, let us hope, pleasant recollections. The fact that by some the name of Christ has been associated with the festive season in no way enhances its value in our estimation. If the belief that such a person was born had never obtained, the season would come and go; and the fact that thousands of individuals profess to believe in the advent of Christ does not increase the pleasure of the annual period of enjoyment; neither has the belief hitherto decreased the number of those who, unfortunately, through poverty and other causes, have been unable to share in the pleasures of the happy season. On entering upon the year 1895 let every Secularist resolve to earnestly work to rid society of its many drawbacks, and, in proportion as we succeed, so shall we contribute to making the coming twelve months what we should all desire—A Happy Year.

CHARLES WATTS.

Moon (to sun)—"Say, pard, couldn't you stay out with me a little while to-night?" Sun—"I'd like to stay very much, but since Joshua's dead I don't know who to ask for an order, so I must decline."

Tommy—"Does God make everybody, mamma?" Mamma—"Yes." Tommy—"Does he have a pattern?" Mamma—"Yes; the Bible says we are made like himself." Tommy—"Humph! I guess he must follow that pattern by his eye."

A few sailors had managed to save themselves from a watery grave, and also a clergyman, who had struggled terribly for his life. One of the sailors remarked, "I wonder what has become of our poor mates?" "Ah, my friend," said the parson, "they have gone to a better world." "Better world be damned," replied Jack; "you took deuced good care to keep out of it."

A FREETHOUGHT MARTYR.

(An Address delivered before the American Secular Congress, at Madison Hall, Chicago, on Oct. 26, 1894.)

BY PROFESSOR LEON LEWIS, M.D.

(Concluded from page 813.)

THE "Holy Office," having Bruno in its clutches, was under a first great obligation to take notice of all the documents pertaining to him, and which were by no means few in number. As a matter of fact, there existed already in the archives the materials of no less than four prosecutions—the two that were outlined in Naples, the third that was commenced in Rome, and finally the fourth, which was that of Venice. To compare the materials of these four cases among themselves, and then associate them understandingly with the new one, was evidently a task that even a tribunal eager for blood could not complete in a moment.

But this was not all.

A large quantity of letters, books, and manuscripts—among the latter two completed works—had been seized at the time of the arrest of Bruno at the house of Mocenigo, and the least that could be done, with any reference to decency, was to take cognisance of all these documents, and then bring them into comparison with the statements he had made in the course of his many hearings.

Furthermore, considering that Bruno had passed a large portion of his life abroad, and published his books over two-thirds of Western Europe, it may have easily entered into the ideas of his prosecutors to explore all his writings and his whole past, making inquiries and investigations in all the cities and countries to which his wandering steps had taken him; and, if so, this inquiry could not have possibly been completed in one month or several, but must have necessarily extended to years, if we reflect how different were the methods of travel in those days from what they are at present.

But even if the inquisitors took upon themselves the vast labor at which I have hinted, there is no earthly reason why it should have occupied them seven years. In the first place, everyone acquainted with the methods of the "Holy Office" is aware that its investigations, once begun, were interrupted only in the rarest of cases. In the second place, there was no difficulty whatever in their inquiry concerning Bruno, for the simple reason that he was one of those men who show themselves just as they are, and had frankly said of his own volition far more than his judges had demanded to know, not only in regard to his ideas and doctrines, but also in regard to his shortcomings in matters appertaining to the Church, not excluding his priestly office and his consequent state of apostasy.

The most likely cause, therefore, of this long delay in our Nolan's case is the fact that the inquisitors had a clear perception of the enormity of the crime they were about to commit, and a desire to avoid it by wringing from Bruno some sort of retraction. The immortal work of Copernicus had now been fifty-five years in the world, and the gory rag puppets of the priests had shrunk before the vast revelations of Nature, just as naturally as a tallow candle pales its ineffectual fires before a newly-risen sun. The priests had begun to comprehend that their little scheme of "human redemption" might have such inherent weaknesses in its joints as to counsel them a certain measure of moderation.

Nevertheless, they found in our Nolan no sort of satisfaction.

They came and went at all hours of the day and night, generally in twos, but occasionally in threes or singly, calling into use all their powers of persuasion and menace, and from time to time deputing their most powerful champions to bring their arguments to bear upon him. Just what took place during this long argumentation, extending over seven years, no man knows; but the silence of his inquisitors on the subject may be taken as a proof that he remained as firm as a rock against all their threats and temptations.

As to the heresies of which he had been accused, they did not have to go far to find them. When they really got to exploring his books and doctrines, they encountered more than they had bargained for. He had sustained that

souls pass from one body to another, and from one world to another; that the same soul may enlighten two bodies; that magic is good and lawful; that the Holy Spirit is one and the same with the soul of the world, and that this is what Moses meant when he said that the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters—all of which notions may be dismissed as a part of the theology of his time, and of no consequence. But he also thought that the world is eternal; that Moses wrought his miracles by magic, in which he was far ahead of all the Egyptians; that Moses himself is the author of his so-called laws; that the sacred scriptures are full of errors; that the devil will be saved; that only the Jews can call Adam father, and that all other men have for their ancestors the races that were created before Adam; that Christ was not God, but a noted magician, and, having deceived his fellows, deserved to be crucified; and that the prophets and apostles were a sorry lot of dreamers, and that some of them had really lost their senses.

All of these propositions, which are enumerated in his sentence, are taken from the works of Bruno, and to them were added three others which came through the denunciations of Mocenigo. As you will see at a glance, the priests had ample cause of complaint. Some of the writers of that time—notably Scioppio—went so far as to say that there was no heresy, old or new, that Bruno had not adopted.

But here is another and a new one, which appears for the first time in the sentence of our Nolan, and which is pronounced impious and absurd—namely, the heresy of the plurality of worlds.

The plurality of worlds is only one of the many forms in which the science of Bruno's time found its manifestation; but the daring genius of our Nolan had at once given to this doctrine a wide development. He not only spoke of the plurality of worlds as a matter that was scientifically certain—as it really is—but he made it a natural consequence and sequence, a very *sin sine quâ non*, of the Copernican system of astronomy, and associated this conclusion with every idea of the infinite, thus making the whole universe a unity of inhabited planets. "*Uno dunque e il cielo!*" he proclaimed, recognising that these vast heavens are one and the same thing, of which our globe is merely a humble integer. He proclaimed that these innumerable planetary systems form a single great system, and that the inhabitants of these infinite millions and billions of worlds form a single intellectual kingdom, a single scene of human activity, a single temple of religion! This view, which, you will please remember, had its first great definition in Bruno more than three centuries ago, is now that of every man of intelligence and progress. I have at hand thousands of quotations in this sense from the master-minds of these three centuries.

Copernicus had indeed taken the earth out of the central position which had so long and so falsely been claimed for it, and had placed the sun in the midst of the planets, in its proper situation; but Bruno went further. For him even our sun is a mere point in the heavens. The fixed stars are also suns, and around them are worlds like our own. This universe of suns and worlds is endless in both space and time, the law of its dissolutions being also the law of its renewals. "God is not honored in one world alone," he exclaims, "but in ten, in a hundred thousand, in an infinite number!"

What chance had Bruno, therefore, as a man who had attained to these glorious perceptions and convictions, to escape from the clutches of the devilish imbeciles who had him at their mercy? We might just as well expect water to run up hill.

But even without this idea of the plurality of worlds Bruno would have certainly been condemned by the inquisitors. He had many a worse spot in their sight than thousands they had condemned previously. In the terms of their theological *hocus-pocus*, he was an apostate, having deserted the order in which he had been consecrated a priest. He was also a relapsed heretic, for the simple reason that he had been repeatedly admonished and prosecuted, and had failed to submit himself to the chastening rod, or to promise amendment for the future. The relapsed heretic, even when he gave promise of amendment, was abandoned to the secular arm and consigned to prison for life. It even happened again and again that the relapsed heretic was burned after acts of contrition and penitence.

And, finally, Bruno was in the worst situation he could have possibly been in, that of remaining impenitent, which is ever punished at the stake. The prescriptions of law and usage to this effect were formal. "The pertinacious heretic"—so read the law—"the pertinacious heretic, that no effort of Christian piety shall have been able to wean from the error of his ways"—there you have it! "Christian piety!"—"shall not only be delivered to the secular arm, but shall be burned alive!"

Yet, as formal as was this prescription, and as great as was the wrath of his enemies, it was not till January 14, 1599, that Bruno was brought before the tribunal which had taken upon itself the task of making an end of him. This tribunal consisted of seven cardinals and eight priests, who had before them eight propositions which had been drawn from the writings of the prisoner, and he was brought into their presence and questioned, to see if he would retract them.

The precise terms of Bruno's reply are not known, the records being missing; but it was certainly negative, for the demand for his retraction was maintained during all the successive hearings, which lasted throughout the whole year. The handling of his case was substantially finished at the end of February, however, and all the later delays and adjournments appear to have grown out of the efforts of the inquisitors to secure his retraction.

At length, on December 21, 1599, the baited and tortured prisoner reached the end of his patience, and turned against his persecutors, as far as a helpless and powerless victim could turn against them.

"Why are you here again?" he demanded, addressing the notary or recorder of the Inquisition. "I cannot change an iota in anything I have said or done. I ought not, and I will not! I know of no reason for changing."

If, in these words, he sealed and hastened his doom, he at least told his tormentors that his great heart and soul had not weakened with their infernal tortures. We shall have to search all history through to find even a few words like them.

Nothing remained but to sentence Bruno, which was done on January 20, 1600, the supreme inquisitor reading the document to him in the presence of the old tribunal. Bruno listened in silence, and without any visible emotion. When the last word had been reached, however, there came into his countenance a flash of the sternest scorn and menace, as if he foresaw how soon his judges and all like them would receive their counter-sentence from coming generations, and these words escaped him:—

"You have far more fear in pronouncing this sentence than I have in hearing it!"

On February 17, 1600, Rome was packed with visitors from all parts of the world, the occasion being the pope's jubilee. No less than fifty cardinals were present, with a corresponding number of bishops and priests. It is said that three millions of human beings had gathered on that day in the capital of Christendom. The streets were filled with processions, and vast crowds swayed from church to church, singing hymns and praying for forgiveness and mercy.

At such an hour, and in the midst of such a scene, Giordano Bruno, without one friend or a single word of sympathy from any human being, was conducted from his dungeon to the Campo di Fiori, a public square, where a stake had been planted, with wood and other combustibles around it, in readiness for his coming. He was preceded and followed by yelling mobs, and escorted by armed soldiers, who had bound his hands behind him. As soon as he reached the stake, he was seized and bound to it, the combustibles heaped around him, and a torch was applied in many places to them. An instant later he was enveloped in a sea of flames, from which, however, came not the slightest cry or groan. And so died Bruno. The fire out, his ashes were scattered to the winds.

Less than three centuries have passed since that awful day, and now what do we see? On that same spot where Bruno died stands a shapely shaft, surmounted by his full-length figure, the whole by the command of the Senate of the Roman nation, and on the pedestal of this monument we read these words in Italian:—

IX GIUGNO MDCCCLXXXIX.

A BRUNO.

Il Secolo da lui divinato.

Qui dove il rogo arse.

Which, rendered into English, are as follows:—

THIS NINTH DAY OF JUNE, 1889,

TO BRUNO.

The Age by him Foreseen.

Here where raged the flames.

Surely the Freethinkers of the world have not toiled in vain during the last three centuries, since they have been able to get such a "shaft" as this into the side of the Christian tiger!

Of course this monument was not erected without tremendous opposition. The whole hierarchy of the Church—pope, cardinals, priests, and press—howled like mad dogs; but howling did not help them. The battle was fairly won, and our victory shows that our dear Bruno is to-day a greater power, and on the very spot where he died, than the infamous and murderous Church that killed him!

Nor is this all.

That stately shaft is merely a suggestion of that greater and more enduring fame and honor which shall rise evermore from the lips of the men and women of all nations to the memory of our glorious brother—a fame and honor which will grow grander with the ages.

As to the lesson of Bruno's life, it can be briefly stated: We are to do as he did. We are to get upon our feet and stay there till the world is redeemed. Since hell is what the priests preach and desire, to hell with their damned gods! Away with everything which debars man from enjoying the bounteous conditions of his existence! Let us dwell henceforth in the radiance of Bruno's great temple—the universal and eternal temple of Nature—and remain children of the light forever.

JESUS, CONFUCIUS, AND MENCIOUS.

THE mass of the people in Jesus's time were poor, miserable, and suffering, because of bad government; one does not need to be inspired to know that. Jesus is said to have been a divine person, sent from God, all-knowing, and the best advice he can give is to tell the poor and miserable that they are to think themselves blessed because they are so accursed here—it will be made all right to them in the "sweet by and bye." Five hundred and fifty-one years before Jesus was born, with a divine or Holy Ghost for one of his parents, there was born in China, of mere earthly parents, a mere earthly man-child, with no pretence to anything divine in his nature. What a blessed thing it was for Confucius that he was not born with a Holy Ghost for one of his parents! It enabled him to have common-sense, human, and humane ideas about some of the troubles of his time. He was not divine or inspired, but was able to say: "When a country is well-governed, poverty and a mean condition are things to be ashamed of. When a country is ill-governed, riches and honor are things to be ashamed of." He said: "The requisites of good government are that there should be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and confidence of the people in their ruler." And being asked, "If it cannot be helped, and one of those must be dispensed with, which of the three should be foregone first?" Confucius replied, "The military equipment." Asked, if one of the remaining two must be dispensed with, which of them should be foregone, Confucius answered, "Part with the food. From of old, death has been the lot of all men; but if the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the State."

Three hundred and seventy-one years before Jesus was born, another merely human Chinaman was born—Mencius. He had a most remarkable mother too. She brought him up with great care and good sense, and he was never known, though only a Chinaman and not divine, to abuse her, as Jesus did his mother. Mencius was called upon for advice on the miseries of the people and their political troubles. Not being inspired, this is how he talked. To a king whose people were suffering he said:—

"Your dogs and swine eat the food of men, and you do not know how to make any restrictive arrangements. There are people dying from famine on the roads, and you do not know how to issue the stores of your granaries for them. When people die you say, 'It is not owing to me, it is owing to the

year.' In what does this differ from stabbing a man and killing him, and then saying, 'It was not I, it was the weapon'? Let your Majesty cease to lay the blame on the year, and instantly from all the empire the people will come to you. . . . Is there any difference between killing a man with a stick and with a sword? The king said, 'There is no difference.' 'Is there any difference between doing it with a sword and with the style of government?' 'There is no difference,' was the reply, and then Mencius gives him other sound advice, as 'to be sparing in the use of punishment and fines, to make taxes and levies light, to encourage agriculture, industry,' etc. Again (p. 28): 'If your Majesty will now make pleasure a thing common to the people and yourself, the imperial sway awaits you.' (P. 30): 'If the people generally are not able to enjoy themselves, they condemn their superiors.' Another time to King Seuen of T'se, Mencius said (p. 34): 'Suppose that the chief criminal judge could not regulate the officers under him, how would you deal with him? The king said, 'Dismiss him.' Mencius again said: 'If within the four borders of your kingdom there is not good government, what is to be done?' The king looked to the right and left, and spoke of other matters."

Mencius said on another occasion:—

"Calamity and happiness are of men's own seeking, as is illustrated by the passage of the Ta'e Kea: 'When heaven sends down calamities, it is still possible to escape from them; when we occasion the calamities ourselves it is not possible any longer to live.'"

Decidedly, the counsels of these Chinamen are to be preferred to the "divine" ones of Jesus. It never was, and never will be, true that poverty of spirit or of purse, mourning and weeping, hunger and thirst, etc., are blessings; and it is criminal to teach so. The more men try to avert such calamities, the more moral they will be. In these matters Jesus was an immoral teacher; Confucius and Mencius were wise ones.

C. B. COOPER.

—*Truthseeker.*

ACID DROPS.

MR. JOHN MORLEY has incurred the patronage of the Rev. C. A. Berry, of Wolverhampton, who contributes an article on the Irish Secretary to the *Young Man*. "Mr. Morley," says Mr. Berry, "although frankly unable to accept our beliefs, is never so happy as when identifying himself with the spirit which lies behind them." Mr. Berry does not state what this spirit is, nor why it lies behind them instead of before them. We thought the "spirit" of a thing was *in* it, not before or behind, or on either side.

Mr. Berry relates the following story: "The Countess of Aberdeen once gave me a beautiful instance of Mr. Morley's fine and reverent spirit. When staying with them at the Viceregal Lodge in Dublin, the Countess, with her charming consideration for other people's convictions, told Mr. Morley that he need not come down to family prayers, as she understood such exercise might not be in harmony with his sentiments. Mr. Morley's reply revealed at once the splendor and the humility of his character. He said he would certainly come down, if only to renew his own sense of littleness amid the mysteries of life, and to begin the day with a feeling of fellowship in service with the humblest member of the household."

Mr. Morley denounces this sort of thing in his book on "Compromise." If he went down to family prayers at Lord Aberdeen's, it is to be presumed that he only "assisted," as the French say. It is not credible that he knelt, or that he joined in uttering phrases whose meaning he disbelieves. If he did so, we perceive the "humility," but not the "splendor," of his conduct.

"A fine and reverent spirit," according to Mr. Berry, consists in keeping people in countenance when they are victims of superstition. To rescue them from this thralldom is "vulgar" and even "blasphemous."

Mr. Berry tells another story about Mr. Morley: "A friend of mine, who was staying with him in the Highlands in company with Mr. Fowler and a goodly muster of notabilities, said that the pleasantest hours of that very pleasant visit were the Sunday evening hours, when the whole company gathered around the piano and spent the time in singing hymns. It may surprise some people to learn that among those who joined most heartily and reverently in the exercise was Mr. John Morley."

Mr. Morley singing hymns—"reverently" or otherwise—would form a striking picture. It is a great pity he was not

photographed in the midst of the performance. But perhaps Mr. Berry is drawing upon his imagination, or upon the memory of an imaginative friend. Probably, if we knew all the circumstances, we should find but little fire for all this smoke.

Dr. James Macgregor, of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, denies the story that he was once confronted in a London theatre by an elder, who said to him, "What will St. Cuthbert's people say now?" the Doctor's reply being, "They won't believe you." The reverend gentleman admits, however, that he was once seduced into going to a London theatre by Canon Sinclair; but he has never been to a theatre since, and of course he will never go again. The play he saw with Canon Sinclair was one of Shakespeare's. Fancy the abject degradation of a man who has to apologise for seeing a drama by the greatest genius in the world!

The Rev. John Robertson, the church clown of Gorbals, Glasgow, declares that "the Genesis account of Creation is not figurative. It is actual and factual." Who will doubt the talking serpent and the rib-made woman after this?

The London *Echo* reports another of those curious pulpit coincidences which sometimes occur through the trade in ready-made sermons. The morning congregation of a certain Monmouthshire church listened to a very impressive Advent sermon by the vicar. In the evening they sat under a special preacher from a distance, and listened to the same sermon, word for word, that they had heard in the morning. The *Echo* gives this report on the authority of a "Cardiff paper."

We have never been able to believe that the Catholics of Ireland would be just to Protestants under Home Rule. Not, of course, that this is anything against Home Rule, for the Protestant persecution of Catholics in Ireland has been without a parallel in the world's history. But facts are facts, anyhow; and on this ground we refer to a correspondence which has been published in the *Record* about the Kilkenny Lunatic Asylum. This establishment is not filled with wild cats, but with Irish lunatics. Of course they are all religious, and the majority of them are Catholics. Well, the Asylum Board is also Catholic, and it has voted £3,000 for a new chapel for the Catholic lunatics, while it declines to spend £30 on a room for the Protestant lunatics. We do not hear of any Atheist lunatics in the hubbub.

Christianity, after upholding slavery as a divine institution, claims that its abolition by Lincoln, the Deist, was a triumph of Christianity. Slavery is dead, but race prejudice remains, and we read that an American parson has had to resign his charge in consequence of allowing a negro clergyman to sit at table with him at a church social.

Lieut. Arthur, one of the officers of the late Sir Gerald Portal's Mission to Uganda, says of the natives: "They are civilised, but not civilised enough to have any crime among them." This is a dark saying. A little ago they were fighting over religion, but the lieutenant probably regards war as distinct from crime. Possibly he means that they have left the horrors of barbarism, and have not yet acquired the vices of civilisation.

At Boston, Mass., the police have raided some of the spiritist *séances*, seizing bogus ghosts with their drapery and paraphernalia. The *Boston Investigator* mentions among the names of exposed mediums Mrs. Ross, Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Fay, Mrs. Beste, Mrs. Bliss, Mrs. Huntoon, Mrs. Sawyer, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Roberts, and Mrs. Foye. Some of these ladies, several of whom were caught parading in their night dresses as materialised spirits, and with armed bullies to protect them in their swindling, may transfer their spirits to this side of the herring pond, for living by fraud on the credulous is a more money-making game than honest work.

The *Church Times*, reviewing Mrs. Besant's *Autobiography*, compares her to Mr. W. T. Stead, and says: "There is something chivalrous, and, in the slang of the hour, 'altruistic,' in the truly colossal egotism of both of them. There is the same curious medley of credulity and scepticism. There is also an eminent capacity in both which inclines the ignorant and impatient to accept them docilely as leaders." It sums them up as "prophets who run before they are sent."

Mrs. Besant appears to have had a fine time of it at the antipodes. She is now in the full odor of respectability. Bishop Cowie, of Auckland, drove her to Bishopscourt and entertained her at breakfast with his family. He would have seen her to the devil before he did this when she was a colleague of Charles Bradlaugh.

One of Mrs. Besant's four farewell lectures was on "Mahatmas." We do not suppose she had much to say about the *Westminster Gazette* revelations. Nor is it

probable that her audiences were converted to a belief in these Wise Men of Thibet. Their applause of Mrs. Besant is no doubt based upon two grounds: first, she is an eloquent lady; secondly, she has taken up with an absurd superstition, and this keeps all the other superstitionists in countenance.

The Religious Tract Society has circulated, since its first formation, a total of 2,896,704,590 tracts. We wonder if any mortal has profited by them, unless those in the printing trade and smokers in need of pipelights.

The vicar of Leeds and other prominent clergy have addressed a letter to the two Archbishops, pointing to the shrinkage of the funds at the disposal of the Additional Curates Society, at the time when the incomes of the benefited clergy are likewise decreasing. It appears, however, from the meeting of the Curates' Aid Society, at which also there was a loud call for more money, that the average stipend of curates throughout the country is £130 a year. Some people think this is more than the average curate is worth, though the average vicar, rector, or incumbent, who gets from double to quadruple this figure, is usually worth even less than the curates.

The *Church Times* says that the result of this double diminution of income is that the supply of clergy is falling short of the demand. Though we question this, if demand be taken in a real sense, it is certain that, while Mr. Gladstone is dilating on the necessity of a learned clergy, the Church has to put up with worse duffers than ever. "Dull or dishonest" was the alternative Leslie Stephen had to offer the "solemnly-constituted impostors." Dull and dishonest will soon have to be the verdict.

It seems that it is a moot point whether, in the case where there is no school-house or other convenient meeting-place, the new parish meetings, like the old vestries, may not be held in the church. Possibly the Law Courts will be called on to determine the question.

In some cases clergymen have been elected as guardians under the District Councils. It is questionable also if this is legal. Under the Municipal Councils Act, clerks in holy orders are disqualified from being members of the Town Council, and this may be held to also disqualify them from being guardians.

The Bishop of Wakefield has been debating at the Ripon Training College on the necessity for more systematic study of the Prayer Book. He did not think people understood it very well, and gave as an illustration that he had inserted a paragraph in his Diocesan *Gazette* urging the people to study the book, and recommending as a help "Daniel on the Book of Common Prayer." He received a letter from a pious layman, who said he had read right through the book of Daniel without finding any allusion to the Prayer Book, which, by the way, inserts the Song of the Three in the furnace of fire, which is left out of the book of Daniel.

It is difficult to write history without some bearing on religion. The Archbishop of Canterbury told his Diocesan Church Committee that he was disgusted to find that, in a school-reader in use in a large number of National schools, the impression was conveyed that there was a time when the English Church was Catholic, and that this was altered by Henry VIII., who substituted for the older body a Protestant Church, to which he handed over the property previously belonging to the Catholics. The Archbishop said he intended to have a thorough examination of all the readers he could find, in order to get them revised where possible. That is, the Archbishop wishes children instructed in history from his standpoint. He never thinks of giving them only facts, or telling them of the differences of opinion which prevail upon such questions.

The Evangelical Alliance has asked that, during the week of special prayer with which all good Evangelicals begin the New Year as an atonement for any drunkenness or gluttony at Christmas, special intercession should be made on behalf of the poor Stundists in Russia. Poor old God must be very deaf and inert if he has to be reminded by the Evangelicals that some good Christians are being persecuted by their fellow Christians of a more orthodox faith.

We wonder if the theory of the Evangelical Alliance is that the old gentleman upstairs takes a snooze after the Christmas festivities, and needs to be stirred up every New Year and reminded of the work before him. They would scarcely deem it necessary to pester him with a week's prayers unless they thought that their supplications would have some effect upon the unchangeable deity.

General Booth, or some other enterprising religionist, should establish telephonic communication with the celestial courts. Once the inventor could secure a straightforward

answer to prayer, his fortune would be made. His only trouble would be keeping off the crowd of pious old ladies, who would want to be switched on to have a dialogue with sweet Jesus.

The *Church Review* says that some very rich men have joined Baxter's movement for the end of the world, and among its prominent supporters is the Assistant Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis, who possibly expects to be one of the 144,000 watchful Christians who will ascend to meet the Lord in the air, the date for which is appropriately fixed for April 1, 1898.

Stone altars are declared by the *English Churchman* to be illegal in England, why and wherefore the Lord in heaven probably could not say; but the *E. C.* laments the fact that one, seven and a-half feet long, in one solid block of granite, has been erected in Blisland Church, and it calls on the Bishop of Truro to say why he permits "such open law-breaking to be perpetrated in his diocese."

The Lord's Day Rest Observance Society sends out a pitiable appeal for funds to meet the heavy cost incurred in seeking to stop the rapid increase of Sunday entertainments. Having bit its own fingers last time, the L. D. R. O. S. will probably wait till its exchequer is replenished before it makes any fresh attack. We only wish it would direct its attention to the Secular Halls.

The *Idler* having proposed the question, "Should Christmas be abolished?" has evoked many opinions, nearly all agreeing in favor of non-abolition, but on different grounds. "The festival, if I mistake not," says Mr. J. F. Bell, "boasts a respectable antiquity, having been invented by a certain Charles Dickens." Others, however, know that it is as much earlier than Jesus Christ, as he was earlier than Dickens.

Mr. Waugh's Society has prosecuted some very bad cases of cruelty to children of late. Curiously, though, it does not appear that any of the culprits were Secularists. Yet it was Mr. Waugh who prompted the Bishop of Chester to allege that the worst ill-users of children were working-class Secularists.

Mr. Gladstone, in his paper on Evangelicalism in the *Evangelical Magazine* for January, suggests that "the war now so actively waged against belief" may help Roman Catholicism. It will only do so by driving the timid, who are afraid of reason and dependent upon authority, into their natural fold. To divide the sheep from the goats seems a bad business to the cross breeds, who are part hair and part wool.

A curious incident happened at San Francisco a week or two ago. A Church, the chief creed of which is that the Anglo-Saxon race is one of the "lost ten tribes," has been started there by a minister named Allen. One day the minister took a number of converts down to the bay to baptise them. There was a big crowd of sightseers on the pier, and, as the timbers were rotten, some hundreds of people were dropped—the tide was out—into the slimy mud of the bay. None were killed, but many received injuries.

According to Mr. Wilson Payne, Walton Jail, near Liverpool, has sixty-five per cent. of its inmates enrolled as Roman Catholics. Is this a case of the more devotion the more crime?

It is computed that, in the wars of religion and massacres in France alone, between 1500 and the date of St. Bartholomew, 765,200 men were killed, 128,256 houses were burnt, and 12,000 women and girls were ravished. This only proves that Jesus was a true prophet when he said he came not to bring peace, but a sword.

The Rev. Edgar Thwaites, rector of Fisherton, illustrated the value of prayer by his own experience. He says that, when at sea, he prayed against sea-sickness, and though the steamer was tossed about in rough weather, he was not ill for a single hour, and never missed a single meal. It was very good of God Almighty to specially look after Mr. Thwaites' stomach; but we wonder if there were any women and children on board who prayed against sickness, but found that Nature's laws were not amenable to their wishes. Did Mr. Thwaites ever hear of Diagoras, who, when he was shown the votive tablets of those saved at sea, asked where were the tablets of those who were drowned?

Mrs. M. E. Williams, the mejum who was invited to Paris by the Duchesse de Pomar (Marie Sinclair), and who was caught personating a spirit by the son of M. Leymarie, the editor of the *Revue Spirite*, protests her innocence, and says her expositors wished "to strip me naked." She has deemed it best to remove her sphere of spiritual operations to another city.

With the monopoly of the schools, with laws against blasphemy which hamper the free expression of opinion and prohibit the endowment of unorthodox views, we are told that the age of destructive criticism has passed away, and that iconoclastic methods are unsuited to our times. The people who make this criticism are usually those who have an interest in, or secret sympathy with, the abuses attacked. In so kindly letting us know the way in which they think the war should not be conducted, our friend the enemy betrays what he fears the most. The dull and decorous scepticism of high-priced volumes never troubled the men of God, who rule through superstition. Voltaire saw this, and said it was the portable little threepenny books that were the most dangerous.

The gospel no longer suffices to fill the gospel-shops. Special attractions in the shape of music, etc., have everywhere to be added. We read that in one of the New York churches over ten thousand dollars a year are spent on music, and much the same obtains here. On a chapel we have to pass frequently, the names of the soloists are always given three times the prominence of that of the minister.

Sunday-school superintendent—"I am glad to see quite a number of new faces with us to-day—bright, eager faces, full of promise, full of interest in the Sunday-school, and rejoicing to be here. And now, before we close the little talk about the lesson and listen to the report of the secretary, I will wait a moment to see if there are any points that have been overlooked. Has any one a question to ask?" Several of the new boys—"Goin' to have Christmas tree this year?"

Archbishop Fabre, the same prelate whose excommunication of the *Canada Reveue* led to an action of law, has ordered a crusade against Spiritism in Canada, and Abbé Bedard was specially instructed to prepare a sermon against the modern superstition. The priest found nothing better or worse to say than that "Spiritualism is nothing more or less than a communication with the Spirit of Evil." If you happen to have a devil, it is as well to put him to some use.

One hit made by the Abbé was the following: "They deny God's right to work miracles, and they fall into ecstasy when they see the wonders of the spirit rappers. . . . These men cannot listen to the explanation of the Holy Book, which tells of diabolical possessions of the bodies of men, but they listen with enthusiasm to the revelations of a table." *Secular Thought* remarks on this: "Horrible credulity! So different from the genuine faith which leads men to understand how a priest's word can convert a cookie into the body and blood of a jealous Being who is without parts and passions."

The Abbé cited many cases from holy writ and Church history to "prove" (!) the possibility of communication with the dead; but he complained that "Spiritualism converses with the invisible world in contempt of divine injunctions and of the authority of the Church." That is where the shoe pinches. These Spiritualists, outside the Church, are carrying on, said the Abbé, "a very lucrative business."

The *Montreal Daily Star* gives a long report of Evangelist Moody's meeting at the St. James' Methodist Church in that city. Cash seems to have been the centre of his discourse. Here is a characteristic extract: "This is a magnificent church, and the trustees are not charging us a cent for the use of it to-day. Why, the Carnegie Hall cost me six hundred dollars a Sunday; while, when I attempted to get the Auditorium in Chicago at the time of the Fair, I couldn't get it for love or money. Now all you Presbyterians, just go down in your pockets, and do something to help out the Methodists. Get out your pocket-book, Dr. Mackay, and start right here." "Lend me your hat then," replies the rev. gentleman, and the action is suited to the word, and the pulpit sets a very practical example to the pews. "If any of you good people are overlooked," resumes Mr. Moody, "just hold up your hand, and I'll direct the ushers to go back to you. No, we won't start the hymn for a moment or two; we'll give you a chance to get your money ready before doing that, and then we'll sing hymn 500—'Blessed Assurance.'" "Blessed Assurance" is doubtless a favorite hymn with Evangelist Moody.

Moody, of course, supports the Book which supports the superstition on which he thrives. He declares he believes every word of the Bible is inspired, and we suppose even the punctuation. "There is," he says, "not a thing that men are cavilling about in the Old Testament that the Son of Man did not set his seal upon. Men say: 'But surely you don't believe the story of Noah and the flood, do you?' Why, these and other events the Son of Man refers to in connection with himself. If you wish to succeed as Christian workers, you must take the whole Bible. All of it

is given by inspiration, and when the Devil wishes to lead men astray this is the point on which he first assails them."

Moody's faith is of the good old-fashioned kind. He continues: "Last of all they say, 'But do you actually believe the story of Jonah and the whale? Yes, I believe that as truly as I believe in the resurrection, for 'As Jonah was three days in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days in the bowels of the earth.'" We are like Moody, and believe the one story just as much as the other.

Moody is right. If you open your mouth wide enough to swallow one yarn, why should you hesitate at another? Admit God made the world, and, as Moody says, he could have made a whale big enough to swallow the world. Only why does not Moody admit the miracles of the Roman Catholic Church?

Moody objects to the modern fashion of picking and choosing. He says: "I have no patience with people who would take all the good out of Christianity, and leave anything that don't suit them." Moody's game is that told the children: "Shut your eyes, open your mouths, and see what God will send you."

Any rubbish seems to go down with the Theosophists. Here is a Mr. C. G. Harrison, a Catholic occultist, who, in a book on *The Transcendental Universe*, attributes modern Spiritism to living occultists. He says that Madame Blavatsky was put into "prison" in an occult sense, and only imagined herself to be in Thibet when she was really at Khatmaudhu. Koot Hoomi was a real person—a treacherous scoundrel in the pay of the Russian Government, who deceived H. P. B., who was also again deceived by a renegade Jew, etc.

Colonel Olcott recently claimed that the real H. P. B. was killed at the battle of Mentana, and that the person who wrote *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* was only the corpse of Madame B., which was tenanted by a succession of spirits who found her body convenient for their purposes. What nonsense next! We incline to say of Theosophy what Bishop South said of the interpretation of the book of Revelation: it either finds men cracked or leaves them so.

Durga Prasad, the editor of the *Harbinger* of Lahore, India, says the word Christian has become a general term of abuse among the native Hindus. "When they want to describe a man as irreligious and wicked, they call him a Christian." "The signs of the Christian are eating beef and pork, drinking wine, vanity of dress, haughtiness, wrath, and violence."

The Hungarians, Poles, Italians, and other cheap laborers who come into the coal regions are regarded with great disfavor by the resident population. I was walking near the railroad with an Irish laborer, returning from work one evening, when I saw one of the despised class walking on the tracks. I turned to my companion and said: "Pat, you had better run down there and make that fellow understand that he is in danger. Make him get off those tracks." "Shure, sor, he's nothin' but a Hungarian," said Pat. "But he has a soul," I retorted. Pat chuckled. "The only soul he has is on his fut." "Well, Pat, he belongs to your Church; he's probably a Romanist." "Indade, thin, the sooner he's in purgathory, the sooner he'll be out," replied Patrick.—*Harper's Drawer*.

Obituary.

TYNESIDE friends of Mr. and Mrs. Dunn, who are both members of the Newcastle Branch, will learn with regret and sympathy of the death of their only daughter, Annie Dunn, whom Mr. Foote named at South Shields some two years ago, and who died at Haswell on December 15, aged two years and two months, and was buried at Shotten Churchyard on the 18th inst. On Mr. Dunn notifying that the ordinary service would not be required, the vicar stated that the only condition on which he could sanction interment was that no service be held in the churchyard. Consequently Mr. C. Cohen, who officiated, was obliged to read the address before entering the churchyard.—J. G. BARTRAM.

I am now convinced that no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought. The old opinions in religion, morals, and politics are so much discredited in the more intellectual minds as to have lost the greater part of their efficacy for good, while they have still life enough in them to be a powerful obstacle to the growing up of any better opinions on those subjects.—*John Stuart Mill*.

SPECIAL.

The New Year's number of the "Freethinker," which will be published on Thursday, January 3, and dated Sunday, January 6, will contain a fine Portrait of the late Charles Bradlaugh, with a long account of his Life written by his Daughter. It will also contain a Cartoon, and interesting special articles. Price, as usual, Twopence.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

January 6 and 13, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 30, Hall of Science, London.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London S.W.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

C. WRIGHT.—You will find some information on the Sacred Books of the World in the *Secular Almanack*. Most of the books are translated, but you will not find them interesting reading unless your mind is that way inclined.

J. BROWNING.—Dr. John Chapman was buried without any religious service, but addresses were delivered over his grave, which is immediately behind those of "George Eliot" and George Henry Lewes in Highgate New Cemetery.

CAPTAIN OTTO THOMSON (Stockholm).—Thanks for your good wishes. We hope there are better days for Freethought in Sweden, and for yourself personally. We notice that your services are acknowledged in Mr. Putnam's *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*.

A. BRETT.—Mr. Forder will supply you with the *Life of Bradlaugh* at 16s.

J. G. BARTRAM.—The clergyman was quite within his legal right. Burials in churchyards must be silent when they are not Christian, unless the parson chooses to strain a point in favor of "infidels," which is very unlikely. There is no law to prevent registrars from being uncivil, or even insolent.

T. E. M.—Will insert poem. Subscription handed to secretary. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Belfast in 1895.

J. K. MAAGUARD.—(1) The wisest policy is to set down Christian tales about the lives and morals of Freethinkers as lies. You can do this safely "at a venture"—as Charles Lamb said. (2) A succinct account of the progress of Freethought in Denmark would be welcome.

G. E. C. NAEWIGER.—Will appear at earliest opportunity.

E. LORD.—Orders for books should be sent direct to Mr. Forder. We have handed him your letter to deal with.

W. G. T.—Will try to find room.

CONSTANT READER.—We can neither credit nor confute the *Chronicle's* statement that Professor Romanes returned to the Church of England before his death. Many such stories have proved to be falsehoods. We understand that a book on Professor Romanes is to be published. When it appears we may learn the truth.

J. TROPWEN.—Hope to insert.

LULIE MONROE POWER.—Many thanks for a proof of your paper read at the American Secular Congress. It is bright, brave, and outspoken. Financial difficulties, we fear, will long have to be confronted by those who conduct journals and publishing in the interest of Freethought.

FRED WILSON.—Thanks for your good wishes, which we cordially reciprocate. We note your remark that "those who wish to assign orthodoxy to Robert Louis Stevenson should read his novel, *The Ebb Tide*, the hero of which is an Atheist (who does not get converted); a prominent character of the same story being a typical pious Christian, who is also a canting rascal. There are numberless expressions in the book which, in respect of 'blasphemy,' make 'infidels' take a very back seat."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Rochester and Chatham Standard—Montreal Daily Star—The World's Advance Thought—Echo—Universal Republic—Two Worlds—Crescent—Western Figaro—Liberty—Truthseeker—Progressive Thinker—Blackburn Times—Lucifer—Twentieth Century—Boston Investigator—Liberator.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

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.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SPECIAL—TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

By virtue of the vote of a special Executive meeting, which has my entire concurrence, I, George William Foote, president of the National Secular Society, hereby summon a meeting of the Society's members, both belonging to Branches and otherwise, at the Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C., on Wednesday evening, January 2, 1895, at 8 o'clock, for the purpose of hearing a statement respecting the action of the Executive with regard to certain grave matters recently in dispute between it and the Hall of Science Club and Institute. No other business can be introduced. Only full members of the N.S.S. will be admitted to the meeting, and cards of membership must be shown at the door.

(Signed) G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. FOOTE will resume lecturing at the London Hall of Science on Sunday, January 6. Meanwhile he is devoting himself to N.S.S. business and ploughing into his arrears of correspondence. Mr. Foote spends hours every day in letter writing, gets nothing for his time and trouble, and pays his own postage. Perhaps the recollection of this fact will damp the indignation of some correspondents who expect answers "by return."

"Who was the Father of Jesus?" after its conclusion in the *Freethinker*, will be revised and enlarged, and published as a pamphlet. Precise references to all matters of fact will be given in the footnotes, and some of the points in the articles will be elaborated, in order to bring out their full importance. This pamphlet should be of considerable service in the struggle for Secular Education.

"Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" is also being prepared by Mr. Foote for publication. It will probably run into a thick pamphlet. Many friends have been inquiring about it lately.

Several friends have thanked us for publishing Strauss's chapter on "The Birth of Christ" in an easily accessible form. It is undoubtedly a performance of great merit, and should have a wide circulation. Freethinkers might do worse than lend it to their orthodox acquaintances.

We must not forget the *Secular Almanack*, which is issued this year in a novel form, and is a good sixpennyworth. It contains information which every Secularist ought to have constantly by him. Every penny of profit from this publication will go into the N.S.S. exchequer.

Our edition of Ingersoll's new lecture, *About the Holy Bible*, is selling well. Some of our friends tell us it is the best thing Ingersoll has ever done. Certainly it is splendidly done. It is a great hundred-ton gun in the battle against superstition. Some millionaire ought to come along and pay for a hundred thousand copies to be distributed broadcast in this country.

The *Boston Globe*, which calls Ingersoll "the most eloquent man speaking the English language to-day," says of his lecture on the Bible: "He discusses every book, from Genesis to Revelation, and then solemnly declares that in the nature of things there is not, nor can there be, any evidence that establishes their inspiration. He denies the divinity of Christ, and says that a God would not have died dumbly, leaving the world miserable in its doubt; but that he was a man, and did so because he did not know the future."

The *Boston Investigator*, which usually reaches us rather late in the day, makes a Voltaire number of its issue for November 24, in honor of the bicentenary of the great French Freethinker. It has an article on him, reprints a portion of Ingersoll's oration on Voltaire, and has an excellent essay on *Voltaire the Sceptic*, by Dr. W. Symington Brown.

It has been said that fully as many Christians turn Mohammedans as Mohammedans turn Christians, and some eminent persons—for instance, Burckhardt, the traveller—have been among the converts to Islam. The *Crescent* of December 22 has a letter from Mr. A. G. Povelieri, stating that his grandfather, Major Arnold Nesbit Matthew, an officer in the Bengal Artillery, who translated some Hindustani works, embraced the faith of Islam when in India.

The quarterly meeting of the Battersea Branch takes place next Sunday, January 6, at 6 sharp. Every member should attend, as there will be business of importance. Those in arrears should pay up at once, as the Branch is in need of funds.

Lord Kelvin's views as to the age of the earth have not been suffered to pass without question, and Professor John Perry and Mr. Heaviside have controverted them. Professor Perry, a practical physicist, thinks the earth's age "very likely hundreds of times greater than the most probable previous estimate," including Lord Kelvin's; while Mr. Heaviside attacks the problem mathematically, using Fourier's theory of the rate of heat dissipation, but applying to it scientific knowledge undiscovered in Fourier's time. He arrives at the conclusion that the age of the earth may probably be 96,300,000,000 years, or nearly 100,000 million. That gives plenty of time for the geologists and evolutionists, even allowing a liberal discount.

This is our penultimate announcement of the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday, January 7. Mr. G. W. Foote, who is to preside, will be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and other leading Secularists, and a large attendance of Freethinkers is expected from all parts of London. All who wish to be present, and to find places, should take their tickets by the previous Sunday if possible.

IS CONAN DOYLE A RATIONALIST?

DR. A. CONAN DOYLE, the historian of the famous Sherlock Holmes, and the author of some of the most popular books of the day, is, it would seem, a Freethinker. At any rate, in his new story, "The Stark-Munro Letters," now running in the *Illustrated*, he makes one of the characters give expression in most convincing language to propositions which are very familiar to readers of the *Freethinker*. And when an author puts heterodox talk into the mouth of his characters, in such a way as to betray that his heart was in the writing of it, the orthodox would certainly say there was a screw loose somewhere.

The story consists of letters from Dr. Stark-Munro to his friend, Herbert Swanborough. And in one of the letters this passage occurs; it is lengthy, but the points are admirably put:—

"Yesterday was my birthday, and I was two-and-twenty years of age. For two-and-twenty years have I adhered by the soles of my feet, and swung round the sun. And in all seriousness, without a touch of levity, and from the bottom of my soul, I assure you that I have at the present moment the very vaguest idea as to whence I have come from, or whither I am going, or what I am here for. It is not from want of inquiry, or from indifference. I have mastered the principles of several religions. They have all shocked me by the violence I should have to do my reason to accept any one of them. Their ethics are usually excellent. So are the ethics of the Common Law of England. But the scheme of creation upon which those ethics are built! Well, it really is to me the most astonishing thing that I have seen in my short earthly pilgrimage, that so many able men, deep philosophers, astute lawyers, and clear-headed men-of-the-world should accept such an explanation of the facts of life. In the face of their concurrence my own poor little opinion would not dare to do more than lurk at the back of my soul, were it not that I take courage when I reflect that the equally eminent lawyers and philosophers of Rome and Greece were all agreed that Jupiter had numerous wives, and was fond of a glass of good wine.

"Mind, my dear Bertie, I do not wish to run down your view, or that of any other man. We who claim toleration should be the first to extend it to others. I am only indi-

cating my own position, as I have often done before. And I know your reply so well. Can't I hear your grave voice saying, 'Have faith'? Your conscience allows you to. Well, mine won't allow me; I see so clearly that faith is not a virtue, but a vice. It is a goat which has been herded with the sheep. If a man deliberately shut his eyes and refused to use them, you would be as quick as anyone in seeing that it was immoral and a treason to Nature. And yet you would counsel a man to shut that far more precious gift, the reason, and to refuse to use it in the most intimate question of life.

"The reason cannot help in such a matter,' you reply. I answer that to say so is to give up a battle before it is fought. My reason *shall* help me, and when it can help no longer I shall do without help."

Is not this clear and forcible language? And can one conceive a Christian even inventing such talk for one of his characters? When a real Christian writes a book into which a sceptic is introduced it is generally for the purpose of fathoming upon him some nonsense which sceptics never utter in real life. And usually, in the end, the flabby Freethinker of the Christian novel is "converted" by an argument or by a catastrophe—generally by a catastrophe, since a good miraculous, hair-breadth escape avoids the necessity of logic. We venture, however, to say that it would be impossible for any real Christian to put such pungent, convincing arguments as Conan Doyle here puts through the medium of Dr. Stark Munro. Therefore it is we ask, Is Conan Doyle also of the elect?

FREDERICK RYAN.

THE STAR IN THE EAST.

"Now it came to pass, on the night of Abram's birth, that Therach entertained a number of his friends, including the wise men and magicians of Nimrod, the king. They passed the night in revelry and merriment, and when they went forth from the house of their host morn was dawning. Lifting their eyes heavenward, they beheld a large and brilliant star rise before them in the east, and swallow up or consume four stars from the four corners of the heavens. The magicians wondered much at this occurrence, and they said one to another: 'Verily, this is an omen connected with the newly-born child of Therach. When he grows up he will be fruitful and increase greatly in power and excellence, and his descendants will destroy this kingdom and possess its lands.'"

The above legend from the Talmud is evidently the origin of the Christian myth of Matthew ii. 1, etc., the Oriental Magi and the star which they saw in the east. The story goes on to tell how the life of the young child was attempted by Nimrod, but was preserved by the cunning of his father, who substituted the child of one of his slaves, whom "the king slew with his own hand."

JAMES A. RICHARDSON.

COLLEGE STUDENTS AND CHURCH-GOING.

THE following remarks of the *New York Sun* might be profitably studied by some of our clerical friends who would like to force people to go to church three times on Sunday: "There is rejoicing among the students of Amherst College because the college authorities have abolished the old rule requiring them to go to church twice every Sunday, and now require them to go only once. It is curious that this measure of relief from religious duty should be so heartily welcomed by collegians, many of whom are preparing for the ministry. They have complained for years that it was very trying for them to sit under two long sermons every Sunday, and to stay quiet during the extemporaneous prayers, of twice-repeated services, and to 'join in singing long metre hymns while trying to keep up with the choir, and to remain seated during the passage of the contribution plate. They were willing to undergo this disciplinary routine one time in a Sunday, but could not stand it both in the forenoon and the afternoon. Some of them were anxious to be relieved from church service altogether; but that would never do for Amherst, which is one of the most religious colleges in the United States."

Well, we will not criticise these impatient young fellows. We may say, however, that when those of them who are preparing for the ministry shall become preachers they may find it profitable to recall how hard it was for them in early manhood to sit through two long-winded sermons every Sunday, even when very nice girls were to be seen in many of the pews.

DARWIN ON CHRISTIANITY.

I HAD gradually come by this time (that is, 1836 to 1839) to see that the Old Testament is no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos. The question then continually rose before my mind, and would not be banished: Is it credible that if God were now to make a revelation to the Hindoos, he would permit it to be connected with the belief in Vishnu, Siva, etc., as Christianity is connected with the Old Testament. This appeared to me utterly incredible.

By further reflecting that the clearest evidence would be requisite to make any sane man believe in the miracles by which Christianity is supported; and that the more we know of the fixed laws of nature, the more incredible do miracles become; that the men of that time were ignorant and credulous to a degree almost incomprehensible by us; that the Gospels cannot be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events; that they differ in many important details, far too important, as it seems to me, to be admitted as the usual inaccuracies of eye-witnesses; by such reflections as these, which I give, not as having the least novelty or value, but as they influenced me, I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation. The fact that many false religions have spread over large portions of the earth like wild-fire had some weight with me.

But I was very unwilling to give up my belief; I feel sure of this, for I can well remember often and often inventing day-dreams of old letters between distinguished Romans, and manuscripts being discovered at Pompeii, and elsewhere, which confirmed in the most striking manner all that was written in the Gospels. But I found it more and more difficult, with free scope given to my imagination, to invent evidence which would suffice to convince me. Thus disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete.—*Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol. i., pp. 308, 309.

DUPLICITY AND DECEPTION.

PAUL, in 2 Cor. xii. 16 boasts of his great success in winning the Corinthians over to his cause, by saying, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile."

Crafty is defined as cunning, artful, fraudulent, skilful in deceiving; and *guile* is duplicity, deceit. As a verb, it means to conceal, to delude.

So Paul, after gaining the Corinthians over to his cause, boasted he practised fraud, cunning, deceit, and duplicity to win them to his views. He told them (1 Cor. ix. 22), "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." He assures his readers that he was "an apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ." His productions make nearly one-third of the New Testament. His teachings enter more largely into the creeds of all Churches than do the words of Jesus; and yet he was an artful deceiver.

Need we be surprised that Churchmen practise fraud, deceit, and duplicity, not only in the promulgation of their faith, but in their dealings with men? The preachers, having learned of Paul, and being "crafty," misquote and misapply the Bible to deceive those who rarely read it for themselves. Scarcely one of them who does not quote, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," applying it to the heathen Sunday, which neither the patriarchs, prophets, Jesus himself, nor the early fathers of the Church regarded as a holy day. They know the words were never applied to Sunday, and yet they keep up the deception of quoting it just the same. Does not every preacher who makes a false application of that passage speak an untruth as fully as any other falsifier who bears perjured evidence to deceive?—*Progressive Thinker*.

Whoever hesitates to utter that which he thinks highest truth, lest it should be too much in advance of the time, may reassure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realise the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes; and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction, leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles, and repugnance to others. He, with all his capacities, and aspirations, and beliefs, is not an accident, but a product of the time. He must remember that, while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future; and that his thoughts are children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die.—*Herbert Spencer*.

SCHOLASTIC FICTIONS.

The maddest act that histories record,
The most absurd of foolish contradictions,
Is placing priests and parsons on the Board
That sifts, for education, facts from fictions.

The nation's schools are surely meant to teach
The facts of nature, free from speculation,
Which all accept, and none can e'er impeach—
The firm essential base of education.

The science text-books all are full of facts,
Whence spring resistless formulas of reason;
But these the parson's text-book counteracts
With speculations, myths, and mental treason.

An honest priest—if honest priest there be—
Would purge our schools of science altogether;
From ev'ry text-book he would set them free,
Except his own one—for "there's nought like leather."

The fact of facts is "unity of facts"
Through time and space, though pleasant, neutral,
Horrid;
Co-ordinate through all the starry tracts,
And o'er the earth, from frigid zones to torrid.

So science text-books teach the nation's heirs
The law of *universal gravitation*;
But parson's text-book scorns it, and declares
That men once left the earth by *levitation*.

The priest—who weighs in pole-ward regions more
Than near the earth's equator—coolly teaches
That nearly 40 North some Jews of yore
Weighed *less than nothing*—flesh and bones and
breeches.

The parson's text-book tells our trusting youth
A tale of genesis and reprobation,
Whilst other text-books prove its lack of truth,
And thus perplex the rising generation.

Since science and the parson's text-book clash,
Why teach them both? Get rid of contradictions!
Make text-books all agree. Expunge the trash!
And teach the children facts, unmixed with fictions.
G. L. MACKENZIE.

If Satan Goes, God Follows.

The Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse assert the existence of the Devil, of his demons, and of hell, as plainly as they do that of God and his angels and heaven. It is plain that the Messianic and the Satanic conceptions of the writers of these books are the obverse and the reverse of the same intellectual coinage.—*Professor Huxley*, "Collected Essays," vol. v., p. 322.

Forgiveness of Sins.

Can the pardon of the Sultan make clean the bloody hands of a pasha? As little can any god forgive sins committed against man. When men think he can, they compound for old sins which the god did not like by committing new ones which he does like. Many a remorseful despot has atoned for the levities of his youth by the persecution of heretics in his old age. When a Ritualist breaks his fast before celebrating Holy Communion, his deity can forgive him, if he likes, for the matter concerns nobody else; but no deity can forgive him for preventing his parishioners from setting up a public library and reading-room for fear they should read Mr. Darwin's works in it. That sin is committed against the people, and a god cannot take it away.—*W. K. Clifford*.

Kings and Gods.

In Peru a dead king was immediately regarded as a god, and had his sacrifices, statues, etc. In Mexico the people of Cholula considered Quetzalcoatl (feathered serpent) "to be the principal god," and they "said that Quetzalcoatl, though he was a native of Tula, came from that place to people the provinces of Tlaxcala, Huxotzingo, and Cholula." Again, "Huitzilopochtli (humming-bird left), afterwards a supreme deity of the Aztecs, was originally a man whose apotheosis may be clearly traced." Polynesia supplies kindred illustrations. The Sandwich Islanders regarded the spirit of one of their ancient kings as a tutelary deity. In Tonga they hold "that there are other Hotooas, or gods—viz., the souls of all deceased nobles and Mataboos, who have a like power of dispensing good and evil, but in an inferior degree."—*Herbert Spencer*, "Data of Sociology," p. 197.

BOOK CHAT.

Two new books likely to be of interest to studious Free-thinkers are *Studies in Comparative Psychology*, by C. Lloyd Morgan, published at Bristol by Walter Scott, and *Darwinism and Race Progress*, by Dr. Hayeroft, published by Swan Sonnenschein.

* * *

A curious pamphlet is sent us, entitled *The Priest and the Woman; or, The Bible and Woman Suffrage*, by Edward Maitland, "co-recipient with the late Anna Kingsford of the New Gospel of Interpretation, and President-Founder of the Esoteric Christian Union." Taken literally, the Bible, coming from polygamous Eastern men, is dead against all claims of equality for woman. It says, "The head of the woman is the man," and "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection." But Mr. Maitland has an esoteric interpretation of his own. He says the Bible "is written by intuitionists for intuitionists." His intuition tells him that the story of the Fall means that man lost his feminine nature, God having made him at first both male and female; the masculine element represents intellect, and the feminine intuition, and he has to recover his woman nature. We do not see how this works out with Paul's statement that "the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression"; for Mr. Maitland holds that it is our intellect that is deceived, while our intuition is always right. Intuition, it appears, is not only represented by the woman, but "intuition is the 'ass' of Balaam, that in man which 'sees the angel' or cognises the divine, to which Balaam as the intellect was forced to yield." We fear our intuition is not sufficiently developed to intuitively discern how all this proves that the Bible is in favor of woman suffrage. All we notice is that esoteric Christianity offers considerable scope for ingenuity of interpretation.

* * *

Since the death of M. Renan, the Freethinking critic who has come most to the front in France is Monsieur Maurice Louis Vernes, who has been since 1880 one of the conductors of the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, a magazine which has done much to break down the exclusive claims of orthodox Christianity, and let the merits of other faiths be known. M. Vernes, who was born in 1845, is the son of a Protestant pastor, and, being himself brought up to the same black business, like M. Renan retains some of the marks of his profession, which, however, he gave up in order to occupy himself with the history of philosophy and the criticism of religion. M. Vernes has translated from the Dutch C. P. Tiele's excellent *Outlines of the History of Religions*, and Kucnen's Hibbert Lecture on *National and Universal Religion*. His own contributions to the subject are principally concerned with the religion of Israel, and to some extent he follows M. Havet and M. G. d' Eichtal in considering the documents of that faith much less ancient than usually thought. He has written a *Histoire des Idées Méssianiques*, and also *Essais Bibliques*, both of which take up a Rationalist position.

* * *

M. Vernes holds that the Bible throughout reflects the views of the Jews of the Restoration, that it is a work of the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, and their successors. He denies the reality of any history prior to the establishment of the Jews in Palestine under these chiefs, and finds in the stories of their past, not actual records, but legends and traditions having largely a dogmatic basis. Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, for instance, were not real characters, but personifications of prophetism and its rôle, created after the exile. The books are so full of particulars of the early heroes because imagination had full play. They are so scanty in their references to the later kings from absence of facts. The law was placed under the authority of Moses, the pretended liberator from Egyptian bondage; the Psalms were ascribed to David, the moral and proverbial literature to Solomon, the Messianic expectation to Daniel; and similarly M. Vernes believes the other prophecies were ascribed to fictitious authors. He places the whole of the Old Testament as written practically between the fourth and the first century B.C.

* * *

We have rarely seen a more fanciful pamphlet than *Celestia Certa; or, The Testimony of the Stars to Christ*, by William Leader, which reaches us from Melbourne. Mr. Leader seems star-struck through living under the Southern Cross, which is no true cross at all. By taking the names of certain stars he finds they have a mystical reference to Christ. We wonder if he is aware of *Veritas*, by Henry Melville, who traced the Biblical legends to the astronomical globes. *Veritas* is a work of erudition, but *Celestia Certa* is one of mere fancy and ingenuity.

* * *

The latest volume of the series of *Sacred Books of the East*, edited by F. Max Müller (vol. xlix.), consists of further of

the Buddhist-Mahayana Texts. The first one is the *Buddha-Karita*, translated by E. B. Cowell. In this work the Immaculate Conception is clearly taught. In book i., verse 19, p. 4, we read: "Then, falling from the host of beings in the Tushita heaven, and illumining the three worlds, the most excellent of Bodhisatras suddenly entered at a thought into her womb, like the Nāga-King entering the cave of Nanda." The next verse declares that "he entered the womb of the queen of King Suddhodana to destroy the evils of the world." We could fill pages with the similarities between Buddhism and Christianity; but it is likely that Mr. Wheeler will shortly further deal with the subject.

* * *

A biography of *John Addington Symonds*, the Freethinking poet and historian of the Renaissance in Italy, by his friend, Horatio F. Brown, has been published by J. C. Nimmo. It is largely compiled from his letters and diaries.

* * *

The Rev. Mr. Sayce has put out a new book, *Lex Mosuica*, or the Laws of Moses and the Higher Criticism, to which we may devote some attention in the New Year.

I THINK WHEN I READ.

I THINK when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
That the pious believers were easily sold:
I should like to have been in it then.

I should like to have been at the Caananite feast
When the water was turned into wine:
If a duty on spirits was prevalent then,
It was clearly a case for a fine.

I should like to have been at that wonderful feed
When the people on fishes were fed:
It's a puzzle to me how those bloaters increased
When the fish were apparently dead.

I should like to have seen that young virgin who said
That her offspring no father could know:
If the spouse had been sharp who she happened to wed,
He'd have made the archangel a Co.

I should like to have seen poor old Beelzebub's feat
In that Blondin-cum-Eiffel tower trick:
Had I been at that time in Jerusalem's street,
Well, I might have applauded Old Nick.

I should like to have seen those poor pigs that went mad
And ran frantically down to the sea:
I should guess deviled pork at that time could be had
At a discount around Galilee.

I should like to have seen Mr. Lazarus rise
(But the story can scarcely be true):
If they'd had his insurance, O what a surprise
For that agent who called from the Pru.

I think when I read those New Testament books,
And the yarns that the faithful believe,
That the parsons, though solemn and staid in their
looks,
When in private must laugh up their sleeve.

S. SODDY.

Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of Bibliolaters? Who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonise impossibilities—whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled by the outcry of the same strong party? It is true that if philosophers have suffered, their cause has been amply avenged. Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules; and history records that whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed, if not annihilated—scotched, if not slain. But orthodoxy is the Bourbon of the world of thought. It learns not, neither can it forget; and though, at present, bewildered and afraid to move, it is as willing as ever to insist that the first chapter of Genesis contains the beginning and end of sound science, and to visit, with such petty thunderbolts as its half-paralysed hands can hurl, those who refuse to degrade nature to the level of primitive Judaism.—*Professor T. H. Huxley.*

BURIAL OF THOMAS PAINE.

A BRIEF biography of Thomas Paine was written by Madame Bonneville, to whom, and to her two sons, Benjamin and Thomas, he bequeathed the bulk of his estate, valued at 30,000 dollars. Madame Bonneville attended Paine in his last illness. She says he spent the last night in tranquility, and expired at her house in the morning about eight o'clock. She then adds: "On the 9th of June my son and I and a few of Thomas Paine's friends set off with the corpse to New Rochelle, twenty-two miles from New York. This interment was a scene to affect and to wound any sensible heart. Contemplating who it was—what man it was that we were committing to an obscure grave on an open and disregarded bit of land, I could not help feeling most acutely. Before the earth was thrown down upon the coffin I, placing myself at the east end of the grave, said to my son Benjamin, 'Stand you there at the other end as a witness for grateful America.' Looking behind me and beholding the small group of spectators, I exclaimed, as the earth was tumbled into the grave, 'Oh, Mr. Paine! my son stands here as testimony of the gratitude of America, and I for France.' This was the funeral ceremony of the great politician and philosopher."

In 1833 Madame Bonneville emigrated to St. Louis, where she died in 1846, a devout Catholic. Her son Benjamin entered the military academy in 1811, served through the Mexican war, and was brevetted for gallant service. He also made important explorations on our western frontier. At the breaking out of the rebellion in 1861 he was too old for active service; but he lived till 1878, and died a colonel of the United States army.

—*Boston Investigator.*

W. H. BURR.

God's People.

We may here make one more reflection, which is, that God having long been their sole king, and afterwards having become their historian, we ought to have for all Jews the most profound respect. There is not a single old-clothes man who is not infinitely superior to Caesar and Alexander. How can we avoid prostrating ourself before a slop-seller who proves that his history has been written by God himself, while the histories of Greece and Rome have only been handed down to us by the profane? Though the style of Kings and Chronicles is divine, still it may be that the actions recorded in these histories are not divine. David murders Uriah; Ishbosheth and Mephibosheth are murdered; Absalom murders Amnon; Joab murders Absalom; Solomon murders Adonijah, his brother; Baasha murders Nadab; Zimri murders Elah; Omri murders Zimri; Ahab murders Naboth; Jehu murders Ahab and Joram; the inhabitants of Jerusalem murder Amaziah, son of Joash; Shallum, son of Jabesh, murders Zacharias, son of Jeroboam; Menahem murders Shallum, son of Jabesh; Pekah, son of Remaliah, murders Pekahiah, son of Menahem; and Hoshea, son of Elah, murders Pekah, son of Remaliah. We silently pass over many other murderous items. It must be acknowledged that if the Holy Spirit has written this history, he has not chosen a particularly edifying subject.—*Voltaire, "Philosophical Dictionary."*

The New Testament.

As regards the New Testament, Christ, its hero, wrote not a single line of it, nor did he order anyone else to write for posterity the history of his mission. No portion of the four gospels was written during his lifetime, whence it follows that they had neither his authority nor his revision. When, then, were they written? No one knows. By whom? No one knows. Whence did the writers obtain their information? No one knows—all is conjecture.—*"Ecce Veritas," p. 105.*

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FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

EVIL AND GOD.—The world is what we see it, abounding in misery and wickedness. If you believe in a moral governor, you are bound to put extraordinary limitations upon his power to vindicate his benevolence, or to limit his benevolence in order to vindicate his power; and, in either case, you take away with the one hand that safeguard to morality which you give with the other.—*Leslie Stephen, "Science of Ethics," p. 456.*

All truths are learned by the scientific method—that is, by repeated experiment. Religion, the revelation of alleged inspiration, is propagated by persuasion, or other empiric method. Edison might preach fifty years about his kinetograph, by which he reproduces moving scenes, and no one would believe him. But he has produced the machine, and we must believe. Inspirationists do not seem to realise that science is their detector.—*Rinctum.*

There is no greater vassalage than that of being enslaved to opinions. The dogmatist is pent up in his prison, and sees no light but what comes in at those gates; he hath no liberty of thoughts, no prospect of various objects; while the considerate and modest enquirer hath a large sphere of motion, and the satisfaction of more open light; he sees far, and enjoys the pleasure of surveying the divers images of the mind. But the opiniator hath a poor, shrivelled soul, that will but just hold his little set of thoughts. His appetite after knowledge is satisfied with his few mushrooms.—*J. Glanvill.*

The origin of this world not being obvious or determinable all men would perish were they called upon to make the discovery as a condition of enjoyment of this world. The question of the authorship of this world is as distinct from its uses as is the architect from a house or the owner from an estate. An occupier can tell whether his habitation is well built, well drained, well ventilated, well situated, although he may never know who was the architect. Any competent person can tell whether an estate is well wooded, well watered, well cultivated, although the landlord may be unknown. In the same way, the fitness of this world as a pleasant and profitable dwelling-place is quite distinct from our knowledge of who designed it or who owns it. From all appearances, the contriver and proprietor of this world looks for no acknowledgment save the happiness of the inhabitants, and exacts no rental save that of progress.—*G. J. Holyoake.*

PROFANE JOKES

It was written, "Good-for-nervousness is a characteristic of clery"; but the intelligent compositor rendered it, "Good-for-nothingness is a characteristic of the clergy."

Several of the Chinese temples have a bell at the entrance, so that each devotee as he passes in may announce his arrival to the deity. There is something more than common politeness here.

Little Boy—"Mamma, may I have that big family bible a little while?" Fond Mamma—"Of course you can, my pet. Your thoughts are on higher things, I see." Little Boy—"Yes'm." Bridget (to herself, two hours afterwards)—"Humph! More of that jam gone. I don't see how that boy reaches it."

THE Bishop of Lyons being at a sumptuous breakfast, the Abbé de Prades paid him a visit. The bishop invited him to partake of some chicken and ham. The abbé declined, and the prelate insisted. "My lord," said the abbé, "I have breakfasted twice already; and, besides, this is a fast day."

"Gid" Mandeville was washing some beer glasses behind the bar of the "Hotel Lindenwald" one Saturday evening, when Pete Cole, a colored gentleman, with a singular protuberance resembling a tumor in the vicinity of the breast-pocket, came shuffling in. Pete leaned up against the counter, and reduced the swelling by pulling a bottle out of his pocket by a sort of eel-skinning process, as the lining came with it. It was a close fit. "What do you want, Pete?" asked "Gid," wiping the bar. "Some 'freshments fo' Sunday, boss. I ain't got de 'bruds' now, but I—I'll pay you Monday mornin', shuah." "Gid" reflected a moment, looked at the bottle, set it down on the bar, took a chew of tobacco, and then glared at the colored man with a fiery eye. "See here, Pete, do you pass the plate in church tomorrow?" "I does, boss; ebry Sunday. I'se been deacon dar since las' fall." "All right, then," said "Gid" tilting a demijohn, and pouring out the whiskey, "I'll trust you this time."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.) : 11.30, Andrew Clark (Fabian), "Trade Union Methods and Work." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "Secular and Social Progress of 1894." (Admission free; reserved seats, 8d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station) : 5.30, tea, entertainment, and dance. (Tickets 6d.) Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road) : 7.30, R. Forder, "Was God Born? Could God Die?"

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street) : 7, a lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES : 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Jews on Tramp."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch) : 11.30, a lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill) : 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

COUNTRY.

ABERDEEN (Crooked-lane Hall) : 7, discussion, followed by short entertainment.

BELFAST (Crown Chambers' Hall, 64 Royal-avenue) : 3.30 J. H. Gilliland, "The Destiny of Man."

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street) : Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street) : 3, readings.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton) : 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, dramatic entertainment—"The Chain of Guilt."

CHESTER (Old Chapel, Commonhall-street) : 6.30, Charles Lewis, "The French Revolution—to the Death of the King."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate) : 6.30, musical and literary evening.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street) : 11, Ernest Newman, "Christianity and Modern Life"; 3, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Savonarola and the Florentines"; 7, "The Redeeming Power of Social Conscience." Annual meeting of Tontine in the morning.

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East) : 3, monthly and half-yearly meeting; 7, J. Easton, "Death."

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea) : 7, a meeting. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street) : 7, musical and other recitals. Wednesday, at 5.30, tea, social, and ball.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office) : 7, The Secretary will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting) : 11, a lecture,

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