

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 35.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1895.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

BLOOD FOR BLOOD.

THE "missionary outrages" in China still figure on newspaper placards. Some disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus are almost foaming with rage at the obstinacy of the Chinese officials and the inactivity of the British government. Methodists, in particular, are calling loudly for a more vigorous policy. Vengeance, of course, belongs to the Lord; nevertheless it is sweet to his devotees. Blood for blood is the natural craving of the old savage, who is still lusty under the thin disguise of religion.

With curious inconsistency—or rather with inconsistency that would be curious in other people—these irate Christians rejoice over the fact that their murdered missionaries have gone to glory. They are now treading the golden streets of the new Jerusalem, drinking the water of the river of life, basking in the smiles of the Lamb, and loafing around the great white throne. Suffering can never touch them again; they are happy—oh, so happy!—for ever and ever, yea and a day after that. Why, then, all these tears? Why all these cries for vengeance, or, as they euphemistically style it, *satisfaction*? Christians should really be grateful to the Chinese "murderers." Preaching to the Chinese, indeed, ought to supersede suicide as a quick emigration route to heaven. If the Almighty has set his canon against self-slaughter—which, by the way, he has not done in the Bible—there is no law against holding out your throat for his enemies to make incision; and while you secure a prompt passage to heaven you have the added delight of knowing that one of the Lord's enemies has involved himself in the guilt of murder, and is thus looked in all probability for the opposite establishment. The ice cream dissolving on your palate will be all the sweeter as you think of his roast sulphur.

This may be objected to as the blasphemous jocosity of a hardened sceptic. Very well then, let us appeal to Scripture. In the lauded Sermon on the Mount we find a most apposite beatitude:—

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The missionaries in China have been reviled and persecuted, and they have their reward in heaven. What more do they want? They have earned the supreme blessing. Yet their friends over here are not exceeding glad; they are in a passion of anger; and they display the utter hollowness and hypocrisy of Christian profession when brought to the test of its own standards.

In that same Sermon on the Mount we find another pertinent text:—

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Is this the attitude of Christians towards the Chinese? Nothing of the kind. Let the truth be told after all these centuries of hard experience. The mild and merciful texts of the Bible are only used by Christians to fling at opponents, and are without the slightest influence on their personal lives or national policies.

Let the missionaries go to China if they will, or to any other part of the globe. Where they go is their own business, as long as they take the risk themselves. But when they clamor for protection, we have a right to see whether they deserve it. If they go into the mission-field in the spirit of martyrdom, we shall respect their motives, however we may suspect their wisdom. But they cannot enjoy the double privilege of martyrdom and citizenship. Let them make their choice. If their attack on the heathen has to be supported by gunboats, it is obvious that their enterprise is not "spiritual." They must be enrolled as ordinary traders.

The fact is, the missionaries are not invited, and are not welcome. They *force* themselves upon the heathen. And in doing so they expect—and when possible *exact*—a tolerance which they would never exhibit themselves. Just imagine what would happen if the Chinese sent missionaries to England! Brutal attacks have been made at Liverpool upon a little body of Mohammedans, who do not go out into the streets to proselytise, but confine themselves to their own mosque. And it must be remembered that nearly a hundred million Mohammedans are subjects of the British Empire! Nay, we need not take such an extreme illustration. Christians here, in the United Kingdom, brutally ill-treat each other. Take the following newspaper report of an occurrence in Ireland on Sunday, August 25:—

"On the street preachers making their reappearance at Sligo yesterday they were beset by a large and violent crowd, and, despite the efforts of a hundred police, they were assaulted with stones, rotten eggs, and filth, so that in a short time their clothes were completely spoiled. Several policemen were struck by stones, but not seriously injured. After three-quarters of an hour the missionaries were escorted to their lodgings by the police."

Rotten eggs and ordure show contempt, stones show hatred, and bloodshed shows the spirit of murder. Only withdraw the police, and dead bodies would strew the ground.

Suppose the preachers at Sligo were foreigners, with strange dress and manners; suppose they spoke in ridiculous broken English, and at the same time gave themselves airs of immense superiority; suppose they told the people that they would all go to hell unless they accepted the preachers' creed, whether they understood it or not; and suppose they broadly hinted that they had powerful friends in the country they came from, who might come with warships and big guns if the people did not behave themselves. Does any man in his right senses imagine that this would not incense the people terribly, and that some of the most fierce and fanatical would not be provoked to deeds of violence?

Oh wad some pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!

Christianity is the most intolerant religion that ever disgraced the earth. It has shed oceans of blood, and it still persecutes wherever it has the power. What right has such a religion to make such a fuss about the consumption (as Gibbon would call it) of a few missionaries? And when the consumption occurs in China, where Christian England has forced a big opium trade in spite of the protests of the Chinese government, the howling of the Christians is enough to shake the world with laughter.

G. W. FOOTE.

VIRGIN BIRTHS.*

THE history of the evolution of human ideas has yet to be written. The material is being collected by the anthropologist from every quarter of savage life. The folk-lore is gathering it from the olden sagas, the ballads and stories of the peasantry, and the fairy tales of childhood; and, as the history unfolds itself, it becomes a romance of greater interest than *Robinson Crusoe*, for it tracks the path of mankind from helpless savagery to the triumphs of civilisation. Among the *débris* of this long, toilsome, and devious path is a curious superstition, enshrined in many a story and exalted in man's highest religion. It is the story of virgin birth. To this myth Mr. Hartland, who, by his *Science of Fairy Tales*, has already displayed his competence, devotes a study which shows in how thorough a way a little section of anthropology is now being investigated.

As the nucleus of his theme, Mr. Hartland takes the classical *Legend of Perseus*, as Mr. Frazer took up *The Golden Bough*. Mr. Hartland has the advantage in his subject. Mr. Frazer had only the killing of the god and his resurrection, or survival; but he brought such wide knowledge of archaic faiths that his work marks an epoch. In the story of Perseus Mr. Hartland has not only the virgin birth, but the fight with the dragon, and the rescue of the captive woman. He has not yet completed this portion of his task, but, if followed up as the first part of the story, it will be extremely interesting.

Mr. Hartland has gone the right way to work. He has formed a vast collection. He has given a simple classification. He illustrates the supernatural birth, in fairy tale and saga, by all sorts of superstitious customs in regard to the nature of life, pregnancy, and sterility, taking us back to the time when the solution of the problem of generation was simply the transformation of life, and beyond this he leaves us to form our own deductions.

My interest here is with the development of the Christian myth, which is no singular revelation, but the descendant of a long line of similar stories. The virgin births of Osiris, Horus, Buddha, and other sun and culture heroes, have long been pointed out by men like Dupuis, Higgins, and Bonwick. Dr. Waitz long since said in his *Introduction to Anthropology*, part ii., sec. 3, p. 373:—

"The reception of human individuals among the gods becomes particularly important in relation to their teachings, which we find in every mythology. They are either considered as incarnations of a god or as the sons of the highest god, born of a human mother or a virgin, and miraculously conceived. They become then the mediators between gods and men, and the benefactors of the latter as the founders of a new religion, the inventors of important arts, the founders of agriculture and social order, and the promoters of civilisation. Squier gives as examples Buddha in India, Fohi in China, Zoroaster in Persia, Osiris in Egypt, Odin in Scandinavia, etc. In the New World belong to this category Quetzalcoatl in Mexico; Manco Capac in Peru, the founder of Cuzco, sent by the sun; analogous heroes we find among the Muyscas in Yucatan, in Nicaragua, and even among the Natchez; Hiawatha among the Iroquois, the founder of their confederacy; Manabozho among the Algonquins; Tainoi among the Guarayos."

Dr. Waitz mentions that miraculous conception is related of Fohi, Codom, Archer, Huitzilpochtli, etc. These and other instances will be found cited in Mr. Foote's tract on "The Virgin Mother" in *Bible Romances*.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in his *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (ii., 22), says of Heitsi Eibib, a Hottentot prophet: "By another account he was born of a virgin, who tasted a certain kind of grass. This legend is of wonderfully wide diffusion among savage and semi-civilised races." Now Mr. Hartland has collected an immense number of such instances, and comparing them with the fairy tales and customs of peasantry and savages enables us to trace their development. To all interested in the study of folk-lore and the early history of mankind, the facts gathered are of great interest. I should like to dilate upon them, but the same matter is dealt with in my *Footsteps of the Past*, and I must here confine myself to Mr. Hartland's references to Christianity. At p. 103 he says:—

"The mystery taught by the creeds of the Church, however, is believed to be something apart from all the other beliefs of the world, something altogether above them, alike in its evidence and its consequences. Christians in thus thinking overlook the fact that to the believer in any religion its evidences are undeniable and its claims are supreme. The fact is that the incident in question is part and parcel of many other religions than the Christian, and is also gravely accepted among what we may call the secular and quasi-historical traditions of tribes in various parts of the Old and New World. Beyond this, as we shall see in another chapter, pregnancy is held actually producible by means analogous to those described in the legends, means outside the ordinary operations of nature. Into the bearing of these facts on the dogma of the Supernatural Birth of Jesus Christ, or on the historical evidence on which that dogma rests, it is not my purpose to inquire. This is a question of apologetics, not of folk-lore."

Dealing with the legends of impregnation by an unusual part of the body, Mr. Hartland remarks that in the Middle Ages a similar idea was current respecting the conception of Jesus Christ, though he does not mention that it finds place in the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*.* He says (p. 131):—

"Sometimes painters represented the Holy Ghost as entering his mother at her ear in the shape of a dove. In the Church of the Magdalen at Aix, in Provence, is a picture of the Annunciation attributed to Albert Dürer, wherein waves of glory descend from God the Father, and in the midst of them a microscopic babe floats down upon the Virgin. During the fifteenth century the opinion seems to have been common that Our Lord entered already completely formed into the Virgin's womb—an opinion which orthodox theologians, in their perfect acquaintance with the divine arrangements, were able summarily to pronounce heretical. But a remarkable parallel to the story of Buddha's conception is presented by a picture of Fra Filippo Lippi, painted for Cosmo de' Medici, and now in the National Gallery. The Virgin is seated in a chair with her Book of Hours in her hand, and the angel Gabriel bows before her. Above is a right hand surrounded with clouds. A dove, cast from the hand amid circling floods of glory, is making for the Virgin's navel, which it is about to enter; while she, bending forward, curiously surveys it. The picture is well worth studying, not merely for its exquisite grace, coloring, and finish, as one of the masterpieces of Tuscan art in the earlier half of the fifteenth century, but also as an exposition of the ideas which were prevalent at that time under the sanction of the Church, and for the purpose of comparing them with Buddhist legends and other stories of supernatural birth, such as we are now considering. Mohammedan tradition ascribes the miraculous conception by the Virgin to Gabriel's having opened the bosom of her shift and breathed upon her womb."

Mr. Hartland has not noticed that in the curious *Livre du vaillant Perseus* (Paris, 1572) the virgin birth from Danae, and the slaying of the serpent by Perseus, are directly identified with Mary and the Savior of the world. But probably we shall get that in his next volume. Mr. Hartland knows his subject so well that I am surprised to find no mention of the profound work of Gerald Massey on *Natural Genesis*, which, I take leave to say, is not to be dismissed unstudied, whether one agrees with his conclusions or not.

It is curious that, almost simultaneously with Mr. Hartland's work, there appears *Le Folk-lore Dans les Deux Mondes*, by Count Hyacinthe de Charencey (Paris: C. Klincksieck), in which a long chapter, entitled "Lucina sine Concubito," is devoted to stories of supernatural birth, which are illustrated from all parts of the world. Count Charencey's earlier work is in the list of authorities, but not this. A more notable omission is that of reference to Theodor Waitz's *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*. The anthropologist of all men, must not forget the labors of his predecessors. But these are not grave faults. What one man esteems another thinks not worth mentioning. For his pains in collection and his skill in exposition Mr. Hartland deserves the praise of every student of that great eye-opener, comparative mythology.

J. M. WHEELER.

Two little children looking at the moon one evening, the younger asked—"Is the moon God's wife?" Older Child (patronisingly)—"No, you silly child; God is a bachelor."

* *The Legend of Perseus: A Study of Tradition in Story, Custom, and Belief*. By Edwin Sidney Hartland, F.S.A. Vol. I., "The Supernatural Birth." (London: D. Nutt.) 7s. 6d.

* See *The Jewish Life of Christ*, edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, p. 19.

THE GOSPELS AND DRAMATIC LITERATURE.

CANON GORE, in *Lux Mundi*, states that modern criticism asks us to regard certain books of the Old Testament "as dramatic compositions worked up on a basis of history." On reading this statement, the question occurred to us, May not the Gospels be considered also as dramatic literature based on the traditions of Palestine? Of course the ordinary orthodox believer may consider that to attempt to connect the drama with alleged sacred writings is very reprehensible. We would, however, remind Christians that the origin of the drama of India is attributed to a sage who was inspired by Brahma, that in Greece it originated in the national religion, and that the performances were given in what were termed the sacred places. History informs us that, for a long period after the Norman Conquest, dramatic performances took place in the churches at certain Christian festivals. In the Middle Ages the Church imitated the Roman dramatists, and enacted, in Christian "places of worship," plays founded on the incidents of the Old and New Testaments, the performers being Churchmen. About the time of the Reformation the drama was the medium selected for the purpose of exposing the vices of the Roman Catholic clergy, and checking their ecclesiastical power. At the present day, in some countries, plays are performed that are based upon Scriptural incidents. And the dramatic element is now retained in the mass that is performed in Roman Catholic cathedrals, and also in certain ceremonies gone through by the High Church Protestant party.

The orthodox view of the Gospels is, that they are the productions of supernatural inspiration, having no parallel in the history of literature. This view of the unique character of the Gospels is persistently maintained by certain Christian sects, despite the fact that eminent Bible scholars and Christian teachers acknowledge that the date of their origin is uncertain, that their authorship is unknown, and that their teachings are doubtful and contradictory. We admit that, if the claim of their divine origin and unique nature could be demonstrated, they would be something more than mere dramatic compositions. But, notwithstanding repeated efforts, this claim has not been proved. The once-cherished idea, that the New Testament is verbally accurate in the sense of its being infallible, is now abandoned. It was found that in the production of such a work clerk-like precision and freedom from the possibility of error would have been necessary; but this was not the case with the Gospels, which were evidently written by fallible men, who held most erroneous ideas upon even the ordinary affairs of daily life, and who committed palpable mistakes in history, in science, and in morals. It is obvious that one historical error, one contradiction, or different versions of the same event, are sufficient to dispose of the theory of inspired infallibility. But when these incongruities are multiplied by the hundreds, as they can be in the Gospels, it is folly to suppose that these so-called sacred writings are aught else but ordinary productions of writers who were far from being infallible.

Moreover, as other books were found that contained statements as wonderful and as inexplicable as any recorded in the Gospels, the claim for the unique character of the latter can no longer be consistently sustained. If it be asked, Will not the objections here made against alleged divinely-inspired books equally apply if the books are regarded as dramas? the answer would be no, inasmuch as the elements which orthodox believers claim as being essential to establish the divine origin and nature of the Gospels are not required in acknowledged human works, however lofty they may be in conception, or brilliant in execution. The finest work in all literature is only called "divine" in a conventional sense—such as we mean when we speak of Shakespeare as "the divine William." The expression is not intended to refer to a power above nature, but to a superior genius in nature. Books that were once called "divine" lost, as time rolled on, the distinctive character originally assigned to them. It is conceded by many writers of Christian apologetics to day that the Gospels are but human productions, and therefore any speculation as to their origin, character, and purpose is legitimate. Although this may be granted by the intelligent few, there are many others who will not accept our contention without questioning its correctness. They

will, no doubt, consider that the consequences of agreeing with us would destroy their old faith in Bible veracity. It may be an advantage, therefore, to refer to instances of the marvellous found in books which are not claimed to be more than human.

In "Plutarch's Lives," which may be readily consulted in the English language, wonderful events are recorded of a far more imposing character than anything found in the Gospels. We are not here concerned as to the causes assigned, or the explanation given, of such marvellous events. They may be ascribed to God, the devil, magic, a perverted imagination, or to any other agency. In any case, it would not affect the position here taken. Our object is to show that incidents which appeared to many to be of a "supernatural" character have occurred in all ages and among all nations; and, therefore, they were by no means limited to the Gospel writers. In a later age than either that of Plutarch or of the writers of the Gospels, "supernatural" characters have appeared, surrounded by all the embellishments supplied by the master-mind of "the immortal Shakespeare," who depicts all kinds of heroes, and makes them illustrate in their sayings and doings the various phases of actual life. He presents truths with dramatic accessories; why may not the same principle be applied to the incidents which are said to have taken place in Palestine? We hope to show that the Gospels furnish just the materials suitable for the application of such a principle. In all superstitions there is, probably, some element of truth; but that is no reason why we should believe all the absurdities associated with grains of fact.

If we admire a drama, it is not necessary that we should regard all its characters as being historical. For instance, Shakespeare gives us a noble picture of Roman life in his play of *Julius Cæsar*, but some persons will not agree with him that Brutus "was the noblest Roman of them all." His action, according to the play, involved the death of one of his most illustrious countrymen, and ultimately he killed himself. Now, whatever opinion may be entertained as to the accuracy and morality of these acts as recorded, the dramatic halo of the play is not destroyed. In like manner, because we discover in the Gospels much that is evidently untrue and opposed to ethical science, we need not necessarily allege that the whole of the narratives are false. It is quite possible that the writers of these Gospels drew upon their imaginations and invested Christ with fictitious qualities, and gave a "supernatural" color to events in his life, as authors of dramatic literature did before, and have done since, with their heroes. Read as mere dramas, much in the Gospels can be understood that otherwise would appear to us quite inexplicable.

A striking parallel exists between the criticism of the history of the Gospels and the study of the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. The question as to when, where, and by whom these Gospels were written has been discussed again and again. Disputes have also been frequent as to their true meaning. The early career of their hero, and his domestic associations, have been subjected to disputation. Similar controversies have taken place as to the writings of Shakespeare. Such questions as, Was he the author of the plays that bear his name? were the originals of his characters his own creations? and what was the meaning of his language? have all been subjects of controversy. The history of his early life, and of his family relations, has been freely discussed. It may be asked what bearing these points have upon the Gospels? Simply this: that, instead of the Gospels being unique in their nature and history, as they are thought to be by orthodox believers, it is easy to show that in many respects the marvellous features in their narratives have an approximate parallel in Shakespeare's literature. Of course it is not intended to compare, intellectually, Christ with Shakespeare, for no such comparison could be made. "The Bard of Avon," in mental capacity, in sublimity of thought, in genius of conception, in grandeur of expression, and in practical useful teaching, towers mountains high above the "Reformer of Judea."

If it be true that Jesus achieved a high position despite his humble birth and lack of early education, it is also true that Shakespeare, having to encounter similar drawbacks, gained a much higher position, and gave to mankind a legacy of intellectual worth, unequalled by anything found in the New Testament, or in any other literature in the world. What could be more extraordinary than the success of Shakespeare in the path of true greatness? He

was born of illiterate parents, he was self-educated, and he appeared amidst a galaxy of mental geniuses and brilliant wits; and yet he outshone them all in intellectual glory. It might be said, to use a form of speech known to theologians, "Never man wrote like this man." Truly, he was "not of one age, but for all time."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

WOMAN AND THE CHURCH.

ONE of the most common claims of the Christian Church is that the present improved condition of woman in our country is owing to its influence and its teachings. It is often asserted by the clergy that her high development and her position of honor and influence to-day are due to the Christian religion. This, like most of the proud boasting in which they are accustomed to indulge, has little or no foundation in fact. So far as our knowledge extends, there is absolutely no evidence that Christianity has been of any benefit to woman; but, on the contrary, we think that it can be shown that, for whatever progress she has made, she is in no wise indebted to the Church. It is a matter of common knowledge that in her efforts to secure her political rights she has always encountered its persistent opposition; and, with few exceptions, the advocates of this great reform have been found in the Rationalistic ranks. The eminent women who have been the leaders in the movement for the enfranchisement of their sex, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Frances Wright, Ernestine L. Rose, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Helen H. Gardener, and Susan H. Wixon, have never held allegiance to the Church, but, on the contrary, have always been pronounced Freethinkers; and whatever progress woman has made in this direction has been in spite of the most bitter opposition from Christian theologians.

This is not strange when it is remembered that the book on which their theology is based nowhere recognises woman as the equal of man, but, on the contrary, regards her as his soulless slave. What can be more degrading than the teachings of St. Paul in regard to woman; such, for instance, as the following?—

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

"And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35).

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.

"For the husband is head of his wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the savior of the body.

"Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Ephesians v. 22, 23, 24).

"Let the women learn in silence with all subjection.

"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

"For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Timothy ii. 11, 12, 13).

With what reason can it be claimed that such commands as these have an elevating influence upon the female sex? If they were rigidly enforced to-day as they were in the early history of the Church, no woman would ever be allowed to speak in a public religious meeting, but would be compelled to remain silent; and if she has acquired any liberty in this respect, she has done so in opposition to the teachings of the Church, and not because of them. According to both Christ and Moses, a husband had the right to divorce his wife at any time, but the poor wife had no redress for her wrongs. How, then, can a religion, which permits or sanctions such gross injustice as this, be of any benefit to women? Had it not been for Christianity, we believe that the women of the United States would long since have been enfranchised, and would to-day be enjoying not only equal political rights and privileges with her brothers, but also equal opportunities in the struggle of life; and it is our profound conviction that

they will never possess the rights to which they are justly entitled until the Christian religion, and all other forms of supernaturalism, are utterly destroyed.

—*Boston Investigator.*

FROM DARKNESS UNTO DARKNESS.

A CERTAIN king, grown old and feeling death drawing nigh, became uneasy about his soul.

He walked feebly amidst the flowers and statuary and glistening fountains in his pleasurance, but found therein no more delight. He sat in his great chambers of carved rare woods and many-colored marble and wrought gold, while musicians of wondrous skill played, and maidens, beautiful exceedingly, danced to him; but unto him came no joy.

"All these things are become as the foolish playthings of children unto me," he cried, "for I am come near the grave, and am sick from fear of what cometh."

And he gathered about him all the men of his kingdom reputed wise.

And he said unto them: "O ye wise ones! I am soon to leave this world of brief vanities. Whither goeth I, and how *then* shall it fare with my soul?"

The wisest of the wise answered: "Out of the grave cometh no voice, O King."

"Say you then," cried the King, "that thy wisdom teaches ye nought concerning these things?"

"The grave is jealous of her secrets, O King," answered the wisest. "Who of the living can say of them, *This I know!*"

And the King was yet more troubled and afraid.

And there came unto the King one day a woman deep bent with the burden of her years.

"O, King!" she cried unto him, "why troublest thou about thy soul?"

"Thou, too, art near death," said the King; "hast thou no trouble nor any fear? The grave is a place of dread surmises; the wisest even cannot say '*It is well.*'"

The old woman answered nothing, but lit a waxen taper.

"*It lives,*" she said.

The taper burned with a steady light and clear, until it was almost consumed; then it flickered.

"*It dies,*" she said.

The taper was consumed and the light vanished.

"It is dead," she said. "Whither goeth the light, O King?"

The King sat awhile in silence, deep in meditation. Then answered he: "From nowhere, whence it came. From darkness unto darkness. It was not; it became; it is not."

"Thou hast said all, O King," said the old woman; "for that which was not, can I regret? For that which cannot be why should I trouble, why be afraid? Let the taper be a parable unto you, O King!"

The woman departed; and the King died, fearing nothing.

HARRY H.

CONSOLATION; OR, RUM AND RELIGION.

THE drunkard feels a "sinking,"

Which he tries to cure by drinking,

But the soothing-seeming antidote is vain;

The "sinking" prompts to drinking,

But the drinking caused the "sinking";

Yes, the *cherished consolation* is the *bane!*

The Christian feels a "sinking,"

Which he treats with *mental drinking,*

But the Bible-seeming antidote is vain;

The "sinking" prompts to drinking,

But the "drinking" caused the "sinking";

Yes, the *cherished consolation* is the *bane!*

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Keep Church and State forever separate.—*Ulysses Grant.*

CHRISTIAN INFIDELITY.

THE word "infidel" undergoes a strange transformation from its original signification when applied by professors of any religion to those who differ from them in belief. Etymologically its meaning is "unfaithful," and in that sense it is always used in speaking of secular affairs. To charge infidelity upon husband and wife, upon parent or child, upon citizen or friend, as such, is not to attribute to any of these an absence of belief in their obligations, but a violation of known duty. In religion this is changed, and he is called an infidel whose ideas concerning God and futurity are not in unison with those of the pious speaker.

In the primary and natural sense of the word, infidelity is a contemptible meanness and a detestable crime. In its theological application it becomes a virtue and an honorable distinction. According to their own definition, we will accept this title from our Christian friends with thankful acknowledgment. The cap fits exactly. We will put it on and wear it with becoming pride. In return we will present our believing brother with a cap which we think will fit equally well.

Believing friend, what a terrible infidel you are! We will not say you do not believe as you profess, because, although your favorite book says "all men are liars," and you agree with that sentiment in a general way, we know that you are painfully sensitive when a particular application of it is made to yourself, and we do not wish to wound your feelings if we can avoid it. We will stifle the misgiving which will sometimes, in spite of our human charity, arise within us, and admit that you believe all that you say you do. We will not charge you with infidelity to Noah's ark or Jonah's whale. We sympathise with the weariness which you must feel on hearing those tales of ancient mariners referred to with merciless frequency. Besides, you probably accept those tales only in their "esoteric" meaning, and as that, for aught we know to the contrary, may mean that there was no Noah, no ark, no Jonah, and no whale, there may not be much difference between us on these points. But, at least, you believe that the Sermon on the Mount is good sound teaching, the very essence of pure and undefiled Christianity, and that New Testament morality is good for mankind. Then, Christian, whatever may be your station in life, whatever your occupation, whatever your intellectual capacity, whatever your moral character, you are, we repeat, a terrible infidel, for you daily and hourly live your infidelity. You believe that the poor are blessed. If you are wealthy, you strive to add to your riches, or, at least, to retain your grasp on all that you possess. You take pride in adorning your persons, your dwellings, and your churches; in surrounding yourself with the evidences of your opulence, and in dishonoring your supposed master by the most flagrant violations of the principles you say were his. The elegant temple of worship, the stained window, the jewelled mitre, the richly carved altar, the luxuriantly cushioned pews, are all in which you believe. You believe that your great teacher said, "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven"; and, infidel to his teaching that you are, you sell the very life blood, the bone, nerve, muscle, sinew, brain, of the poor, that you may add to the treasure on earth, of which you already possess more than your just share.

If you are poor in this world's goods, we do not wish to speak severely, for poverty and Christianity together are two terrible burdens to carry. Still, if you make an attempt to lighten me of these burdens, if you ask for a fair wage for a fair day's work, if you take one thought for to-morrow's needs, or endeavor to provide for the future of your family, you are acting wisely and doing your duty as a man, but are a living infidel to the religion in which you believe.

If you occupy a pulpit, if you write "Rev." before your name, and, perhaps, "D.D." after it; if you call yourself a Christian clergyman, and claim to be a teacher of the Gospel, under whom the laity should sit and submissively learn, you are the most outrageous infidel of all, for you demand respect and distinction for belonging to a class described by your own high authority as "whited sepulchres"

without, but "within full of dead men's bones and all manner of corruption." The dead bones of dogmas slain by the sword of reason long, long ago, the fetid corruption of superstition and hypocrisy, are within you, and when you speak it is that which is within that proceedeth out of the mouth. The priestly caste is the same here to-day as it was in Judea two thousand years ago, as it always has been in every land and at all times—the representative of the dead past crushing the living present. Whether the infernal tortures you most dread are to be found in a lake of fire and brimstone, in agonies of conscience, or in the just execration of mankind, you who, from your untaxed pulpits, would stop the wheels of human progress and bid freedom succumb to tyranny, answer this question, as pointedly addressed to you as it could at any time have been to your predecessors, the sacerdotal infidels of ages gone: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Christian infidel, your kind of infidelity is bad for your moral nature. If Christianity is good to believe, it must be good to practise. If you think it is true, honestly try to live accordingly. If you find that impossible, confess that it is an impracticable system, and try another. Cease to be an infidel in fact, and accept the name gracefully. It is sure to be applied to you if you practise fidelity to your own reason. It will not hurt you. It is an honorable distinction.

In conclusion, I will give two definitions of the word, perhaps as a specimen of what might be done in the way of a much-needed "Dictionary of Exoteric and Esoteric Meanings." Infidel—Exoteric: Unfaithful, false, treacherous, deceitful, one who fails in the fulfilment of obligations. Esoteric: One who is faithful to the principle of truth, declining to profess religious belief which he does not possess.

E. J. BOWTELL.

—*Boston Investigator.*

THE BIBLE.

THE very strangest facts in the world are perhaps seen in the life of religious people. Mohammedans believe most ardently that the Koran is of supernatural origin; the Hindoos believe the same of their holy books, as do Buddhists and certain others; and Jews and Christians believe the Bible to be a book of unity and of divine origin. Even educated laymen will still talk to you as if doubt or disbelief of the origin and authority of the Bible had never been heard of; just as, when I was in New Zealand, a young popish barrister spoke to me devoutly, reverently, believingly of the miracle of St. Januarius' blood—the transparent, impudent trick perpetrated at Naples yearly! I see no difference worth naming between the man who believes the Bible and him I have just named. Each can give his paltry reasons for his belief; and the reasons of the one are quite as good as those of the other—quite. Early bias decides the faith of each and all believers. There is nothing else in it. No free and unprejudiced man could believe the Bible to be anything above human, or anything to boast of at that. No unbiased man ever believed the Naples miracle-trick, or any other miracle. Scholars must write and speak for many a year yet before human ignorance and prejudice drop the Bible. Of course, we know its fate well enough. The Bible is a doomed book, which by-and-bye will no more be revered than other antiquities, or than other things which have played a noted part in the world's affairs, for good or ill. Dr. Wildboer has recently published *Origins of the Canon of the New Testament*, which the *Westminster Review* thinks finally disposes of the traditional theory of the supernatural origin and unity of the Old Testament. People, in other respects rational enough, will still believe in the book, for logic plays no part in most people's faith. They were trained in a certain course, and they stick to it, no matter how ridiculous. But we Freethinkers must lose no opportunity of turning the Bible into ridicule, for so long as it rules it cheats, and the cheat perverts the world and produces much mischief. Let us carry on the fight.

JOSEPH SYMES.

IN AND OUT OF CHURCH.

DOGMA dealer, talking treason,
Spurning truth, perverting reason
In and out of folly's season
Year by year.

Oh, a plague on all the twaddle
In your hum-drum niddle-noddle,
Mammon's law-paid molly-coddle,
Limp with fear.

Is there "sin" in worldly leaven?
Yet there's not one day in seven
When you fail to sell your gammon—
All for pelf.

"Heaven to let" to paying lodger;
Ah, you canting devil-dodger,
Damn not us who spurn your Mammon—
Damn yourself!

If I've done some bad behaving,
And I don't deserve the saving,
Then 'tis honor bids the braving
Of my dues.

Pilot souls to your sky places
Who are full of Sunday graces,
And with sweat from poor men's faces
Pay for pews.

Call the purse-proud from their blisses,
Call the fashionable misses
From "advisers" holy kisses—
Call and call.

Call the people's sly mind-shapers,
Call the kings of daily papers,
Cutting "law and order" capers—
One and all.

Here's my Lord Archbishop, mind you,
Paid to gorge himself and blind you,
Till your very self can't find you
Anywhere.

Simple Jesus! See the old 'un!
Why, his dinner-plates are golden!
May the sight our hearts embolden
In our prayer.

Ah, dismiss them with a "blessing,"
All intoning and confessing;
Never more our souls distressing
With their cant.

Help to silence priestly mumble,
Help the Mammon-temples tumble,
Freedom's banner o'er the jumble
Firm to plant.

Come, dear toilers, stained and weary,
Come and help the world grow cheery,
Come from out your prison dreary—
Built by greed.

You who labor heavy laden,
Slaving mother, trampled maiden,
Ever preached to, ever preyed on,
In your need,

Let your winters grow no colder,
Rise at last and dare be bolder,
Setting shoulder firm to shoulder
For a thrust!

Yokes be eased, and burdens lighter,
As the great Hope warms the fighter,
And the broad New Day grows brighter
And more just.

L. S. BEVINGTON.

The Delight of the Gods.

Sacrifice, under its varied forms, in its manifold conceptions—sacrifice is the fundamental doctrine of religion. "Slay! slay!" This word of the bishop who massacred Béziers might have been inscribed upon the pediment of certain edifices, which have less deserved the name of temples than of slaughter-houses. The flesh of men, the meat of beasts—for these the appetite of the gods has been insatiable. —*Elie Réclus, "Primitive Folk," p. 304.*

ACID DROPS.

MATILDA PERZ is a Mexican washerwoman, inhabiting the town of Anahuac. Of course she owns a collection of flat irons. She kept them in a basket, together with a little image of the Virgin. One night—it was the seventeenth of June—Matilda was astonished to see a light issue from the basket. Examination proved that the flat irons were innocent; it was the image of the Virgin that had taken to illuminating. Being placed on the wall, this wonderful image was visited by a multitude of sick people, who were all healed. This beats Lourdes hollow. Evidently the American continent, even in the matter of miracles, doesn't mean to be beaten by "effete Europe."

After the recent exposure of Lourdes miracles, through the confession of the impostor, Delanoy, it is not surprising that the priests should try to drown the voice of criticism by shouting "More miracles! More miracles!" Father Bailly, Superior of the Pères de la Croix, who organized the new pilgrimage to the Sacred Grotto, assures an interviewer that this year's miracles are extremely numerous. Telegrams announcing cases of healing pour in daily. Hundreds of cripples have thrown away their crutches. Poor fools! They'll want them again very soon.

Twenty-five thousand pilgrims have visited Lourdes during August. Think of it! In the land of Voltaire! Is it not absurd to say that the work of "destructive" Free-thought is completed? So far as the masses are concerned, science has only spread a thin veneer of common sense over their coarse credulity.

The recent revelations of the prize Lourdes miracle seem to have little effect on the minds of the Catholic sick, who of course are kept in ignorance by their priests. Trains full of the sick and dying have poured into Lourdes during the past few weeks. "Their wretched occupants," says a correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, "are lying helplessly about the railway station clamoring to be carried to the sacred grotto."

The *New York World* (August 5) has the following: "Macon, Ga., August 4.—'He has come to see me, and I know he forgives me now,' said old Mrs. Nobles this morning, who is under sentence of death for the murder of her husband. She had helped to put him out of the way because, as she said, he 'pestered' her. She says the old man came to her bed-side last night, and together they discussed their children. 'We didn't say nothin' about the killin', but I jes' know he forgives me, or he wouldn't hev cum.' It is generally believed that she will escape the gallows, as the sentiment here against hanging a woman is very strong. She is very illiterate, the lowest type of the 'cracker.'" Persons of Mrs. Nobles' type usually do see ghosts, and ghost-worship lies at the bottom of all religion.

The believer in prayer who some time ago suggested that the occasion for floods was the many petitions for rain, now attempts an explanation of cyclones. So many people are at once praying for those at sea, who are going in opposite directions, that the Almighty, to oblige them all, sends the winds in a circular direction. We have advised the believer to communicate his views to the meteorological office.

In connection with the Church of St. Raphael, where the marriage between Hélène de France and the Duke of Aosta took place, there is a story not generally known. It was built with the moneys of a converted Jew named Raphael. Just after the building was completed, Raphael had a dream that he would die within a week after the consecration of the place of worship. As a matter of course he endeavored to delay the consecration by fair and unfair means, until a priest, with the help of a licensed victualler from the neighborhood, who procured a bottle of absolutely pure wine, consecrated the edifice. Then he told Raphael, who took to his bed and died three days afterwards!

Thirty-nine Christian congregations in Japan claim to be self-supporting, and, as they pay for themselves, desire native teachers, without outside rule, from Europeans. The home missionary societies do not see it. They have a shrewd suspicion that Christianity, left to the Japanese themselves, may take new and surprising developments.

According to the religious papers, the missionaries lately killed in China have attained to the glory of martyrdom, and are presumably enjoying most excellent positions in heaven. But, somehow or other, there is no gratitude shown towards the Chinese who have conferred these benefits upon them. The British Government is called upon to adopt a more "vigorous" policy, and we all know what that means—

bullying, gun-boats, big guns, and wholesale slaughter, ending up with wholesale theft.

It is really time to tell these missionaries that they have a perfect right to go to China, if they can; and a perfect right to get killed there, if they must; but no right whatever to demand assistance or protection except from the Lord; and if he chooses to let them be slaughtered, let them be duly thankful for his kindness in calling them to paradise, instead of screaming for vengeance and somebody's blood.

"Christ has commanded us to preach the Gospel to every creature." So says the *Methodist Times*. Very well then; let the missionaries preach it, and let Mr. Price Hughes join them; but let them also look to Christ, whose commands they are obeying, to take care of them while under service. It is certainly a strange thing to see a British redcoat, with a rifle and a hundred cartridges, helping the Lord Jesus to protect his employees.

William Ferguson, aged twenty-six, appeared before the Glasgow Sheriff on a charge of stealing butter and tobacco. He said he was glad to find himself there, as his apprehension had brought him to the feet of Jesus. The Sheriff gave him six months to study the feet of Jesus thoroughly.

The steeple of Croyland Abbey, one of the oldest in the kingdom, has been struck by lightning. The rector appeals for £1,880 for repairs.

A number of deaths by lightning are reported as occurring during the recent storms. Doubtless such phenomena contributed to the superstition of the past, and perhaps some of the judgments of God which we read of in the Old Testament may have happened in this way.

At Quakertown, Pa., lightning struck the Methodist church, killing one young lady and melting her gold watch into a solid mass. The pastor, the Rev. L. F. Bowman, had most of his clothing literally torn from his body, and all down his face, chest, and the whole front part of his body the lightning made a frightful burn. Seventeen others were stunned, and lay in heaps on the floor. The church was turned into a hospital, and a miracle of Providence was discovered in that the 600 pound bell had not fallen to crush the congregation. "He is a rum un, is Providence," as the rustic remarked.

The *New York World* reports that at Bay City, Michigan, "James Burgess, in a fit of despondency over inability to get work, prayed publicly and privately for death. His prayer not being answered, he tried to starve himself to death; but the starving process became tiresome. As a last resort he tried to brain himself with a hatchet. His head was badly cut, but the doctors think he will recover."

Strong-minded Freethinkers have often been a bit plagued with the sentimental piety of relatives. When a Freethinker is dying and cannot help himself, these well-meaning impertinents sometimes bring in a member of the Black Army to mumble a little nonsense and depart full of cake and sherry. Sometimes they print sloppy verse on mourning cards, and sometimes they carve imbecilities on tombstones.

Professor Huxley was apparently allowed to die in peace, but his relatives gave the great Agnostic a Christian funeral; and, according to the *New Age*, they have engraved the following lines upon the stone which marks his grave:—

And if there be no meeting past the grave;
If all is darkness, silence, yet 'tis rest,
Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,
For God still "giveth his beloved sleep,"
And if an endless sleep He wills—so best.

These are not the sentiments which were expressed in Huxley's writings. He never prated about "God," nor spelt his pronouns with capitals. This is the unconscious betrayal of piety speaking through the dead Agnostic's lips.

One of the strangest coffins ever told of is that for which the British war department is said to be responsible. The story is that a workman engaged in casting metal for the manufacture of ordnance at the Woolwich Arsenal lost his balance and fell into a cauldron containing twelve tons of molten steel. The metal was at white heat, and the man was utterly consumed in less time than it takes to tell of it. The war department authorities held a conference, and decided not to profane the dead by using the metal in the manufacture of ordnance, and the mass of metal was actually buried, and a Church of England clergyman read the service for the dead over it.

The General of the Order of the Brothers of Charity went from Rome to Erlau to inspect the convent there. While

the General was examining the books, a maid-servant entered the room with some refreshments. Female servants are against the rule in convents of this Order, and the General immediately dismissed the Prior and confiscated all his private property.

Belief in possession by devils is not yet extinct. A writer in the *Tablet* (August 24), speaking of the Luciferans, says: "A far worse case is that of Phineas Walder, who died in London some years ago. He succeeded in getting his daughter, Sophia, so completely possessed by a demon that she is now in hopes that Antichrist may be her great grandson." The curious thing is that Sophia is not in a lunatic asylum. According to the writer, she "generally is either in America or on the Continent, not in London."

Harry Alfred Long is going on to fresh conquests. After apprising the Scottish people of what is unknown in London—namely, that the Hall of Science has been turned into a Salvation Army barracks—he got into a debate with that unutterable blackguard who started the filthy libel which we ran down a few months ago in a court of justice. Long and Powell met in the City Hall to show how Christians love one another. Here is one incident of the encounter, described in the *Daily Mail*: "Shouting and bawling were engaged in. A large number of those present got up on their seats and hurled threats and epithets at the principals and the chairman." By and by there was something like a free fight, and the police entered to restore order. And the whole blessed lot were Christians!

The clericals have put out three schemes for getting more public money for their schools. (1) That of the archbishops and bishops, asking that funds shall be provided by the Education Department. (2) The scheme of the National Society that the State should fix the teaching staff and pay the teachers in all schools, and (3) a scheme of paying for voluntary schools out of the rates. The *Times* calls on them to coalesce their schemes, but as plunder is the object of them all, we sincerely hope that, while the thieves fall out, honest folks will keep their own.

The *English Churchman* says that the Church at Stratford-on-Avon "appears to be more of a Shakespeare Show House" than the House of God. It would not have so many visitors were it otherwise.

The *Difesa* is the official organ of the Roman Catholic Church in Venice. This paper contributes towards peace on earth and goodwill among men by declaring that, "besides being perjurers, forgers, thieves, and swindlers, the Jews are also assassins for religious purposes." Mrs. Robertson, the wife of the author of *Pra Paolo Sarpi*, who records this, and much else in the same strain, remarks: "In England such articles would have no effect on the public mind, save to despise both writer and publisher; but in Venice, where there are, unfortunately, too many 'clerically' disposed families, the effect has been to close a number of doors against Jews seeking employment, and to render the life of those who hold places and offices almost unbearable."

W. J. H. Traynor, the President of the American Protective Association, writes in the *North American Review* on the menace of Romanism. He points out that all good Catholics hold that the Pontiff is delegated with supreme temporal power from a divine source, and that this claim is not put forward in America simply because the civil law is in blank opposition to ecclesiastical law. He claims that the A. P. A. keeps the Catholic Church in check. Pius IX. thundered anathemas and bulls at all liberty whatsoever. Leo XIII. and his lieutenants in the United States approach the same end wrapped in the mantle of American liberty, and with speech softened by the oil of diplomacy. All Papal policy is directed to one end—an end that outlives all popes; and, when Leo goes the way of all flesh, will be followed with the relentlessness of a sleuthhound by his successor. This end is the restoration of the temporal power, the bringing of the whole world to the foot of the Church, the exaltation of the Holy Father into the Sovereign Pontiff.

A gentleman in Shakespeare remarks that the Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. You can prove almost anything from the Bible, if you only go the right way to work. Its contents are so vast and various that you can find a text to countenance nearly every craze that arises in the addled brains of superstition. Take the following illustration. One of the Messianic texts, according to Christians, is this: "He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken." This is said to refer by anticipation to Jesus Christ. The two thieves who were crucified with him are related to have had their legs broken by the Roman soldiers, but J. C. was spared this outrage, as it was thought that he was dead already.

But now come the Peculiar People, whose peculiarity is that they try to act upon what they consider the Bible

means. One of them has just told an East-end coroner that Peculiar People never break an arm or a leg; if they do, it proves they are *not* Peculiar People. Being asked for a reason, the "Peculiar" elder, who was giving evidence at the inquest, cited this very text about keeping his bones. Any strong fellow with a big iron bar could demonstrate on the legs of all the Peculiar People that there was not a Peculiar Person amongst them.

These Peculiar People preserve some old superstitions. The early Christians believed their bones were the seeds of the resurrection, and hence objected to cremation. Bastian tells us that the natives of Bamba say their great Fetish dwells in the bush, where he cannot be seen by anyone. When he dies the priest carefully collects all his bones, so that he may preserve and nourish them that they may revive again when they acquire new flesh and blood. The legend of Jesus escaping the practice usual with criminals is founded on this superstition.

In their doctrine of oiling and laying on of hands, the "Peculiar" also maintain the express injunctions of St. James. Yet the bishops who lay their hands on the heads of all the priests they ordain, saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost," doubtless deride the superstition of the Peculiar People, who are not quite so anxious to escape from kingdom come as themselves.

A new Messiah has sprung up in New Mexico. His name is Francis Schlader. Like the old one, he has spread his fame by his mighty deeds. A string of people follow him, praying to touch the hem of his garment. Blind, deaf, and halt are led or carried to him; women with tiny babes bring them to him to be healed of ailments real or imaginary; old, middle-aged, young, ignorant, and educated Mexicans, Americans of the highest standing in the community, visit him at the lowly homes he most frequents, or in the homes of the rich and prominent, in which he is a welcome guest. One prominent and wealthy citizen has promised to build a church to Schlader if his wife be cured of an affliction. Schlader must look out. He may get too popular, and then perhaps he will be run in by the authorities, if not served like his prototype.

How does this Messiah work his miracles? They follow from his appearance. He is a native of Alsace and Lorraine, and is said to bear a remarkable resemblance to the pictures of J.C., and arranges his hair in a similar manner. This is all the secret. The result is he is followed about by devotees praying him to heal them, and many declare they are healed. Great is the power of faith, as the advertisers of pills well know. It may carry a colocynth concoctor to fortune, as, in the old days, it turned a successful medicine man into a god.

More than one fetish man in Africa, and fakir in India, has gone far on the road to godhead by knowing the occult properties of croton oil. He writes a prescription therein or smears the paper, tells the patient to swallow the charm, and, when it operates, the patient declares, "Here is an exorcisor of demons worthy to rank with the gods."

The Methodists of Colorado are a little ahead of those at home, and have voted in favor of admitting women as lay delegates to the General Conference. Whether the women or the Church will gain by the change is a question.

Mrs. Gregory, who obtained a decree nisi for a divorce on the ground of the cruelty and adultery of her husband, a Manchester clergyman, has had the decree made absolute.

The most Christian and Catholic Emperor of Austria does not want any real disciples of Jesus in his dominions. Dr. Bela Skarpan was serving his second half year at the garrison of Kashan, and six weeks before the termination of the time wrote a letter to the Commander, declaring himself as a disciple of Count Tolstoi, and that his principles now forbade him to serve any longer in the army. It was at first believed that Skarpan was disturbed in intellect, and the matter was treated as if nothing had taken place. But the Doctor persisting, he was placed under arrest, examined as a lunatic, and, finally, sentenced to the loss of his rank, to three months' strict imprisonment, to serve all the lost serving time, and to the loss of his medical diploma. He cannot practise in the Austro-Hungarian kingdom, or in any other State in alliance with that kingdom.

Dr. Griffith John, of the English mission in China, says: "The opium trade has been forced by Christian England upon the Chinese, and that in direct opposition to the moral convictions of the nation as well as the honest and long-continued resistance of the Chinese Government." This must be pleasant reading to English Christians who send missionaries to convert the heathen Chinese. "The Chinese," says Dr. John, "call us 'devils,' and when I think of this unprincipled and destructive trade I cease to wonder

at it." Well, "the devils" are Bible-readers and true-blue Christians.

The aim of the new Curates' Movement is, we are told, to bring about these two reforms: (1) The entire abolition of the present system of patronage in the Church of England; and (2) the abrogation of all the existing distinctions between incumbents and curates by the substitution thereof of parochial colleges of priests. If, says the Rev. Dr. Thackeray (Greenwich), these reforms can be obtained within the Church without the necessity of Disestablishment, well and good. If not, then some amongst us will know that that policy, to which we are at present disinclined, will not be without its very valuable compensations.—*Daily News.*

The Spiritists of the Manchester district had a meeting in regard to the recent conviction of Miss Smith and Mrs. Hankey for professing to tell fortunes. They did not resolve to carry the case to a higher court, leaving the suspicion that there is something shady in the case; but they petitioned Mr. Balfour, "as a recognised friend of psychical research," to repeal the obnoxious enactment by which the convictions were obtained. They also submitted a memorial to the Home Secretary for an inquiry on behalf of Miss Smith, making no mention of her co-defendant. The meeting also passed a resolution, necessary for its own credit, denouncing those who practised mediumship for purposes of gain.

By the Act of George IV., chap. 83, sec. 4, every person pretending or professing to tell fortunes, or using any subtle craft, means, or device, by palmistry or otherwise, to deceive or impose on any of Her Majesty's subjects, is punishable as a rogue and vagabond; and liable, on conviction, to commitment by one Justice for not exceeding fourteen days, or by two Justices in petty sessional court for not exceeding three calendar months. The words "or otherwise" were, in the Slade case, construed to cover pretence to hold communication with the spirits of the dead, the Act being interpreted by the light of 9 George II., chap. 5, which repealed the Acts against witchcraft, while making its pretences a felony. The penalty of three months' imprisonment with hard labor was given in the case of Slade.

The practice of astrology, for the purposes of gain, is an offence against the statute, and even the offering by advertisement in newspapers to cast nativities and answer astrological questions, and pretending by circular letter, in return for certain remuneration, to furnish a description of the person, liability to disease, marriage, occupation most suitable, etc., by the position of the planets at nativity, without proof that anybody has been told anything, has been regarded as ample legal evidence of a pretence to tell fortunes.

We are totally averse to any attempt to stamp out old faiths or new by legal penalties. Every form of opinion and practice should have a fair field and no favor, unless it is a manifest breach of the peace or incitement to crime. No one is obliged to pay mediums or astrologers, any more than to consult a phrenologist or physician; and it is always the poor ones, who in some cases manifest very interesting survivals of ancient faiths, who are dropped upon. It is time this Vagabond Act was repealed. Obtaining wealth by false representations of another world is too old a game, and one too consecrated in high places, to die out by any other force than that of education.

A writer in the *English Churchman* on "Are Missions a Mistake?" says that Christ's commands, for which he cited the Apocryphal Mark xv. 15, are addressed, like the clap-net sermons of devil dodgers, "to men only." Therefore missionary women had no business in China.

Sixteen thousand deaths from cholera are reported from Japan. Of course, the Christian God cannot be expected to look after heathens.

Thaddeus McCarthy, Bishop of Cork, 1490-1492, has had his cultus confirmed by the Roman Congregation of Rites. His funeral is said to have been marked by miracles, and there are plenty of priests who hope to get some good out of the old bishop yet.

The *Journal of Education* gives the following among actual children's answers:—Q.—Give a proof of the earth being round. A.—It says in the Bible, "World without end." Q.—What happened to the Israelites after they ate the quails? A.—They had indigestion. Q.—On what occasion did our Lord use the words, "With God all things are possible"? A.—To the woman who had seven husbands. Q.—How many Apostles were there? A.—Thirteen. St. Matthew tells the names of twelve, and St. John gives us the name of the other one—"Verily," that Jesus used to talk to so much.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 8, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—Sept. 1, Plymouth; 22, Sheffield. October 6 and 13, Foresters' Hall, London; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh. November 17, Liverpool.—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.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—Thanks for the enclosures. Scotland is still much darkened by Christian superstition, but the light of Freethought is gradually spreading.

W. BENNETT.—You may well have knowledge enough to be a Freethinker—as it is evident you have—without having acquired the art of writing good verse. The composition of poetry does not come by nature, like eating and drinking; it comes by close study and long and careful practice. Take our advice and stick to prose.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—Miss A. Brown, hon. sec., begs to acknowledge 13s. 4d. from Finsbury Park Branch, and requests that all communications, for the present, be addressed to her at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

G. H. RUSSELL.—We have handed your letter to Mr. Forder, who attends to all orders for literature. Mrs. Besant's *Law of Population* has been withdrawn from circulation. She is no longer a Malthusian.

J. SEDDON.—See paragraph. We hope Mr. Cohen's labors in Manchester will be crowned with success.

A. J. H.—Mr. Armstrong's letters may deserve all your praise, but we cannot adopt your opinion without seeing for ourselves. Why not send us the correspondence?

W. T. GRIFFITHS.—We have no right to reprint the lady's article, much as we might like to. Glad to hear you are so pleased with Mr. Foote's success at St. James's Hall.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, N., is wishful to obtain lecturing engagements during the winter in London. He is booked up to the end of September. Metropolitan Branch secretaries will perhaps note, and communicate early with Mr. Jones.

J. G. BARTRAM (Newcastle).—Sorry to hear Mrs. Thornton Smith disappointed you on Sunday. It is a serious matter when a hall and advertising have to be paid for. We hope there is a satisfactory explanation.

C. E. DORG.—The circulation of Mr. Engström's pamphlet will do us no harm; quite the contrary. Mr. Foote is now making fresh country engagements, and will offer Liverpool a date.

J. P. GILMOUR.—Sorry the Glasgow *Evening News* published such a slanderous statement without inserting your correction. Long and Powell are a curious couple. Strange fruits of Christianity after nearly two thousand years' culture.

J. MORISON.—Cuttings are always welcome.

A. G. LEVETT.—Received with thanks.

W. AGNEW.—Mr. Foote has many pamphlets to publish as soon as he gets rid of his present worries. His presidential duties, by preoccupying his time and attention, have been a serious hindrance to his literary work.

ENQUIRER.—We have not compared any of the English translations of Renan with the French originals. No edition of the *Vie de Jesus* is valuable unless it be the thirteenth or a later one. Renan's preface to the thirteenth edition shows a great advance on the path of heterodoxy. In particular, he gives up the Johannine authorship of the fourth gospel entirely. The book itself, apart from that preface, has very little value except as a literary composition. It is not history, but elegant religious fiction.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Glasgow Evening Citizen—Port Elizabeth Telegraph—Crescent—Open Court—Christchurch Times—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Boston Investigator—Morning Truthseeker—New York Public Opinion—Isle of Man Times—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette—Freidenker—Fur Unsores Jugend—Twentieth Century—Diamond Fields Advertiser.

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.

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.

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 23 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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.

SPECIAL.

My experiment at St. James's Hall has been a striking success. For the time of the year the audiences have been simply wonderful. One of the most gratifying features has been the attendance of many strangers, including a considerable proportion of ladies. As soon as I am free to do so, which I hope will be shortly, I intend to organise another course of lectures in the West-end of London, either at St. James's Hall again, or in a still larger hall in the immediate vicinity.

For the present our Sunday evening meetings will be held in the fine, large Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, within three minutes' walk of Aldersgate-street Station. Cars from the East-end, and from Holborn and Bloomsbury, pass the door. The first lecture will be delivered this evening (September 1) by Mr. S. P. Putnam, his subject being "Colonel Ingersoll and American Freethought." This is Mr. Putnam's last appearance on a public platform during his present visit to England, and there should be a large gathering of London Freethinkers. I take the chair myself on this occasion.

I have engaged the Foresters' Hall for thirteen Sundays at my own risk, undertaking to pay everything, including the lecturers' fees. We cannot take money at the doors, but tickets are printed as for the St. James's Hall lectures, only at a lower figure. The prices are one shilling, sixpence, and threepence. Friends can purchase tickets, which bear no particular date, and use them at any time, giving one up to the attendant when they choose to come. They are obtainable at 28 Stonecutter-street. Friends who come to the hall unprovided with a ticket will find Miss Vance outside, and she will inform them where tickets can be procured.

One friend who had sent a cheque for the Hall of Science fund not only desires me to keep it, but has sent a further cheque for the same purpose. I shall be glad to hear from others as to whether I can use all or any part of their donations, or even of money that was intended for shares—which is, of course, otherwise returnable. I have undertaken a heavy responsibility. Time and energy I am ready to give, but others should help me financially.

The rank and file of our party ought to do something. They may be able to give little, but that little should not be withheld. I propose to open a "Shilling Fund" the first week in October. My readers who desire to see the torch of Freethought carried over London and the provinces should send me during that week postal orders for one or more shillings. At least a thousand ought to subscribe in this way, and if they do so they will be investing a trifle, most practically, in the propagation of their principles. And what is the value of a man's principles if he will not back them up with a shilling?

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S experiment at St. James's Hall came to a most successful close on Sunday evening, when another splendid audience assembled at his lecture on "Religion in the Light of Science." Many ladies were again present, and a considerable number of strangers. The lecture lasted nearly an hour and a half, and the meeting was keenly responsive to the end. Mr. James Rowney presided again. He is an excellent chairman, and has been very active in promoting the success of this venture. The little discussion which followed was hardly worth a mention.

Plenty of handshaking went on before the meeting entirely dispersed. It was generally agreed that the "attack on the West-End" should be continued. Mr. Foote was asked what he meant to do next. He replied that he intended to organise more lectures during the winter, either at St. James's Hall or at some other hall in the neighborhood of Piccadilly. "The sooner the better" was the general cry.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured at Milton Hall to an enthusiastic audience. To-day (Sunday, September 1) Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth.

Mr. S. P. Putnam has been amongst us for four months. He has had a good time, as the Yankees say; and if money is far from plentiful, he has experienced no lack of hospitality. Wherever he has gone the "saints" have endeavored to make his visit interesting and enjoyable. He has thus seen more of Great Britain in four months than many visitors contrive to see in a year. At the same time he has made acquaintance with the Freethought party in this country, and he will be able to tell his own party in America something of our spirit and methods.

Mr. Putnam's first lecture was delivered in London. His last lecture will also be delivered there, and Mr. Foote will take the chair, as he did on the previous occasion. The subject of the lecture will be "Colonel Ingersoll and American Freethought." London Freethinkers should make a big rally this evening (September 1). The meeting will be the first in the fine, large Foresters' Hall (Clerkenwell-road), which Mr. Foote has engaged for thirteen Sundays.

The farewell dinner to Mr. Putnam takes place on the following Wednesday (September 4) at the Holborn Restaurant. The tickets are four shillings each, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote will preside, and will be supported by Messrs. Charles Watts, George Anderson, G. J. Holyoake, J. M. Wheeler, R. Forder, and other leading Secularists. Those who intend to "assist" (as the French say) at this function should obtain tickets by Monday, otherwise a hitch may occur in the arrangements. The Holborn Restaurant people must be informed on Tuesday how many they should provide for. There is sure to be a good dinner, some brief if not good speeches, and some cheerful music to season the whole entertainment. All that is wanted is a good company—that is to say, good people and plenty of them.

The *Universal Republic* (Portland, Oregon), in its August number, says: "The *Freethinker*, published in London, England, stands at the head of the list of Freethought journals. It is ably edited. It teaches the Brotherhood of Man, in place of the creeds and dogmas taught by the Christian world."

We do not think it necessary always to return a compliment, even to a lady. But we may say why we appreciate this one. The *World's Advance Thought* and the *Universal Republic* are two monthly journals in one. They are each of eight pages, mostly written by the editor, who sets up the matter in type, carries forms to the press, prints, and publishes the paper. The editor is a woman, Lucy A. Mallory. She lives mainly on biscuits, cheese, and raisins, and devotes her surplus to feeding and educating other people's children. When we heard this from a vegetarian paper we sent her a copy of our own.

The August 5 number of the *New York World*, sent us by Mr. L. Levine, is quite a Freethought number. It gives long extracts from John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Jefferson, and others on Liberty. The enforcement of Sunday laws is opening eyes in America to the natural alliance between religion and tyranny.

One would expect a Christchurch paper to be very ecclesiastical. But the *Christchurch Times* is anything but that, and has an excellent article on "Agnosticism" in its issue for August 23. It deals mainly with the views of Professor Huxley, of whom it says: "The truth never had a more fearless and noble champion." "Huxley," it adds, "has taught us that philosophy is, after all, only a purified form of common sense. We must all learn to say we 'don't know.' Like the mongoose of Kipling's delightful tale, the human race should have for its motto 'Run and find out'; but we must consent to be Agnostics until our inquiries are satisfied, instead of jumping rashly at the conclusions we happen to deem convenient or comforting."

The members of the Westminster Branch had their annual excursion by brake to Epping Forest last Sunday. The weather was all that could be desired. After a delightful ramble through the forest the party all sat down to tea at "The Robin Hood." All expressed themselves as having spent a most enjoyable day. Large quantities of old *Freethinkers* were distributed on the down journey.

Mr. C. Cohen is conducting a week's Freethought Mission at Manchester. Sunday mornings and evenings he lectures in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints. Saturday evening (August 31) at 6.30 he delivers an open-air lecture in Stevenson-square, and on the following Tuesday (September 3) another near the Labor Hall, Gorton. The latter is a new station, and we hope the local Freethinkers will rally to Mr. Cohen's support there.

We are pleased to notice that the case of the Seventh-Day Adventists, who are in prison in America because they obey

the Bible injunction to work six days and rest on the seventh, is to be brought before the Supreme Court of the United States. If it does nothing else, it will serve as an eye-opener to the hypocrisy of the Sabbatharians.

It is gratifying to see a paper like the *Glasgow Herald* allowing space to a correspondent like "Neuron," who argues powerfully against the existence of "soul" or "spirit" independently of the body. The same paper inserts a letter from "Essayist" chaffing the ministers who let ladies read essays before Bible classes, and asking them why they don't stick to the inspired teaching of St. Paul, who said: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach." Good old Paul! Cock-a-doodle-doo!

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker"
(July 27 and August 3).

FRIDAY is a brilliant day in the annals of the Secular Pilgrim. I visit Newstead Abbey, the home of Lord Byron. Mr. Stapleton and Mr. Parrott are with me on this trip. Newstead Abbey is only about eight miles from Nottingham. It was in Nottingham that Byron lay in state. I was pointed to the very room, in an ancient building, where he thus lay. An immense procession followed the funeral cortege to Hucknall Church, where the poet was buried with sixty of his ancestors. There is nothing more beautiful in any land than Newstead Abbey. It is now owned by Mr. W. F. Webb, a friend of Livingstone, and himself a renowned traveller and hunter. He must possess great wealth, for the Abbey is kept in a most noble and attractive condition. It is approached from the station by a wide gravelled road, through green fields and beautiful groves. We pass over the river, alongside a dashing cataract which flows from the lake above. The Abbey is of the loveliest architecture of the Middle Ages. It is grace itself, and indicates the wonderful poetic feeling of that awakening time, a dawn gemmed with a thousand stars. Only the front arches of the church itself remain, with the windows and the portal, giving a weird, faint picture of immemorial years. The habitable part still endures, in which are hundreds of relics of the poet and his ancestors; the rooms where kings have visited and slept; portraits of beauties and heroes; swords and helmets; and the table where Byron wrote his immortal verse, in which there was more concentrated energy of genius than in any other poetry of his time, and which was ablaze with revolutionary thoughts. We see the surroundings that nurtured the mental life of the fitful bard; the ruins of the past and the beauties of nature; the fields and groves and waters; the Annesley Hills, where brooded the spirit of his fatal love. We can imagine the poet amidst these variable scenes, so many pictures of which abide in his glowing melodies. Newstead Abbey is rich with treasures, and the gloomy history of man is here recorded, together with its most marvellous romance and illustrious genius. Here is the oak which Byron planted, and which, once on the point of dying, now flourishes green and beautiful. Here is the tree on which he carved his own and his sister's name when he bade farewell forever to Newstead Abbey; and here is the monument to his dog, who possessed all the virtues without the vices of man. About the Abbey are extensive and magnificent gardens, in which are flowers of all hues, spreading along the wanderer's path with oriental luxuriance.

From Newstead Abbey we go to Hucknall, a colliery town, smoky and dirty, and busy with marketing; an uncouth place, it seemed to me, for the ashes of the immortal bard. The church is a solemn but not very imposing structure. A melancholy graveyard spread around it. No one of distinction is buried here. Within are the immortal dead. The bones of Byron lie beneath the stone floor. We read the inscription, and muse in the shadow of the grey walls. An unpretentious mansion of the dead is this—a gloomy place to quench the fires of the human mind that flame to the stars, then sink to earth. All this, and nothing more! was the refrain that rolled through my mind as I gazed upon the dim relics of the dead. No voice can utter anything more. The darkness abides while we love and honor the heroic spirit. Byron perished in the glorious effort to win liberty for Greece; and more than this, be it spoken to his undying praise, Byron's maiden speech in the House of Lords was for the defence of the Nottinghamshire workmen, among whom he then lived, against the death penalty which the aristocrats were endeavoring to inflict upon these poverty-stricken men who in their blind wrath, destroyed some machinery, thus putting the rights of wealth above the rights of humanity. Against this Byron protested with all the ardor of his soul and the eloquence of his tongue.

Besides the memory of Lord Byron in Nottingham, there is the house where Henry Kirke White was born; and also, in the process of demolition, the birthplace of Phillip James Bailey, who, half a century ago, at the age of twenty-two, wrote "Festus," a most extraordinary and brilliant poem, and, although living to this day, he has not again penned a line worthy of preservation. There is also a house on one of the main streets, still standing and used for a hotel, in the same shape it was in 1460, years before the discovery of America. For over 400 years no alteration has been made in its appearance.

On Saturday morning Mr. J. R. Anderson accompanied me to the university, which is a notable and flourishing institution. It has over 1,700 students. It has a machinery and engineering department connected, so that the student can have a practical and industrial education if he wishes. It has also a very valuable museum.

Mr. Anderson is a prominent citizen, a member of the Common Council, and a pronounced Freethinker. Among other friends here are Mr. and Mrs. Marriott, formerly of America. Mr. Marriott was in the army under the Stars and Stripes. I had also the pleasure of meeting Mr. Amos Waters, a busy contributor to many literary periodicals, and a philosophical Freethinker. He is known on both sides of the Atlantic.

Mr. Jackson, Mr. Murray, Mr. and Mrs. Burton, with others, are friends that added to the pleasure of my stay in Nottingham. I had a varied and entertaining visit, which, while restful, was animated and instructive. I must thank Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton and the little children for their cordiality and goodwill, and the enjoyment of a happy home, and I heartily reciprocate the wish of my host that I shall see Nottingham again before I surrender the ghost.

On Saturday afternoon, June 29, I leave Nottingham for Sheffield. I am accompanied by Mr. Snell, who, I hope, will sometime visit me in America. He would like Yankeeland, I am sure, for a change. And the Freethinkers of our country would find in him a bright and brave champion.

The first impression one gets of Sheffield, as he rolls through on the railroad train, is that of a smoky, dingy manufacturing city, where it is impossible for anything like beauty to flourish. I was told when I came to Sheffield that there was nothing to see, only long rows of tenement houses and vast and gloomy buildings, lighted with the glare of furnace fires, in which a thousand busy hands sharpen cutlery for the world. But, as a matter of fact, Sheffield is a handsome city, when you travel out of the smoke to the surrounding hills. There are five valleys in Sheffield, and five meandering streams here unite into the river Don. Quite a variety, therefore, appears in Sheffield. It is not a monotonous manufacturing place, where only smoke and steam fill the air, and nothing is heard but the rumble and roar of myriad machineries. From the crowded valleys where the vast business of the city is transacted, and where indeed the blue light of heaven is often shut out by the murky clouds that encircle the heart of the fiery metropolis, come upon ample hills, beautiful green fields stretch away, groves and gardens glitter, and nature puts on her most alluring robe; and as you wander over these hills you advance into magnificent prospects, and no scenery in the world can surpass the loveliness and grandeur of what greets you in the vicinity of Sheffield. Somehow or other, Ruskin seemed to see the point, and he placed here one of the most charming, instructive, and valuable museums to be found anywhere. It is worth crossing the Atlantic just to view these wonderful treasures. And why did Ruskin place these priceless exhibitions of nature and art alongside the rush and bustle and dirt of Sheffield? Why not at Oxford or other quiet town with educational and artistic associations? Ruskin himself supplied the answer. He said that ironwork was a necessary art; that the cutler's art at its best, as manifested in Sheffield, is "unsurpassable by that of any living nation," and also "because Sheffield is within easy reach of beautiful nature scenery."

The Sheffield Corporation, not unmindful of the honor bestowed upon the city by Mr. Ruskin, purchased Meersbrook Hall for the home of the museum—a beautiful estate with old trees, and walls gay with roses and clematis, and in summer the haunt of blackbirds, thrushes, and rooks. It is in perfect accordance with the glories of the museum, which, though small, contains the most precious wealth of nature and of art. One could spend days in these little rooms, and yet ever find something new and entrancing to study and muse over. Every picture and cast on the walls, every book and print in the library, every stone in the mineralogical gallery, is selected for a special purpose, and in its own peculiar department each is the best that could be procured. The object of Mr. Ruskin was to educate the people in art. The mineral room simply astonishes one with its crystal splendors. There are "precious stones," from sapphires to diamonds, and from topazes to emeralds and opals. There is a unique example of a pale-blue form of topaz from the Ural mountains, associated with smoky quartz and mica. Perhaps there is nothing like it in the world. The iridescence of the opal is amazing, and you wonder that in

the heart of nature, in "the dark unfathomed caves," such glorious hues could flash and flame. As you look into these beautiful crystals there seem to be opening upon you depths of color shining far away in ever-changing lustres while you pass from point to point and gaze into the resplendent chambers. I know of no place where more wealth of natural beauty is revealed.

The books are ancient—going back to 1160—and they display the exquisite art of those old days, and indicate with what a religious fervor the printers must have labored. These books are enriched with miniatures, scroll-work, and ornamental borders. Here are also many of the original drawings of Turner; a painting of the front of St. Mark's, which it took the artist three years to complete, and many of the works of ancient Italian masters which cannot be found even in their own land. I was surprised to find such a wonderful display, amidst such beautiful surroundings, near the grimy machineries of toil. It shows that Ruskin had some deep insight into the heart of man, and that he saw the latent poetry and romance of human toil; that where man labors, even in dust and darkness, there are the possibilities of noblest things. One might spend days in Ruskin's museum and find instruction, for, though the collection is not imposing, yet it is infinitely suggestive, and leads one into a thousand pathways of thought and investigation.

Sheffield is not simply a hive of industry—a black mass of manufacturing facilities; it is a city with noble and magnificent surroundings, and whichever way you journey a wide and splendid country appears. Sherwood Forest, now no more, except in patches, once waved its endless branches from this vicinity to Nottingham. A cultivated land takes the place of the "boundless contiguity of shade." The harvest field shines, and the elegant dwelling. I only have the opportunity to enjoy one drive, and that is to Chatsworth Hall, the home of the Duke of Devonshire. This is about twelve miles from Sheffield. On Monday we set forth, a somewhat cloudy day, but now and then the sunshine burst forth in brilliant glory, and all the distant heights catch the changing lustre, and a scene of enchanting variety is presented. We travel over immense hills. There are no sharp ascents here. It is mostly like a vast table land, teeming with harvest, while yet the moorlands offer a bare and solitary appearance, so that we see nature in majestic contrast. The scene on every side is ample. As we roll alongside Froggatt Edge, one of the most lovely and stupendous landscapes in the world unfolds from the valley beneath to the mountainous horizon. Embosomed in the valley, hundreds of feet below your flying vehicle, is a charming ancient village, over which hovers the atmosphere of golden romance. The valley, rich with fields and groves, opens and spreads away in gorgeous loveliness, while the shining river Derwent, celebrated in song, like a ribbon, ornaments the long-extending prospect. Above the valley stretch the vast hills in sombre columns, edged with wild precipitous rocks and dusky forest. On the side whence we view this resplendent panorama the walls seem to go sheer down to the valley itself. Almost from our very feet and the banks of the luminous river, swells above and beyond the village, that hangs like a jewel on the scene, the enormous height, whose verdant fields sink into desolate spaces.

From this attractive point we sweep on to the great hall, around which are so many memories of the past. Passing through the delightful park, where the deer are grazing, we see Queen Mary's Bower, a lovely island, and yet a prison for the imperious queen, where her heart must have poured itself out in useless lamentations. Here she could enjoy the sunshine and the flowers, look upon the bright, blue sky, but round about her rolled the relentless waters, and there was no escape. Beautiful were the scenes she gazed upon in her captivity—the great hall, in the midst of massive foliage, where royalty was wont to spend its hours of luxury. Within its spacious rooms are some of the finest pictures and statues in England, rare china and porcelain and treasures of the olden time. The garden attached is a marvellous profusion of riches, pomp of color, with fountains and glades and cataracts in the gloom of wood and steep. The hot-house is the largest in the kingdom. It has taken the painters three years to re-decorate the roof and sides. It shines with tropical splendor. Alas for the fortunes of the day! just as we left this luxurious abode, to see new curiosities, a sudden shower descended upon our troop, and we were obliged to find refuge wherever we could, for the stately footman had forbidden the use of umbrellas while in these palatial regions, and so we had to dive under the bushes, and it was a somewhat disconsolate scene for about ten minutes, the rain pouring in torrents. Well, we were repaid for the momentary discomfort. After the shower the sun came out more gorgeously than ever, and the afternoon was simply superb. Everything was fresh and glittering. We visit the church and churchyard, where is buried Lord Frederick Cavendish, who was murdered at Phoenix Park. It is a quiet place, surrounded with a model village. If one might find, outwardly, a paradise on earth, it would be on this spot, where everything seems so

harmonious. All the dwelling-houses have a supreme aspect of utility and elegance. But I suppose I should get tired of such a comfortable existence in about a day's time, and should want to fly off to the turmoil of London. There is such a thing as life flowing along so smoothly that death would be welcomed as a change. However, these placid scenes remain in the memory with a charming and romantic perspective, and we dream of these mild resting-places when "life's fitful fever" is over. Amidst the glory of the descending sun we return homeward, climbing great hills and plunging into deep valleys, with the moon in queenly lustre along the radiant heavens, and then the innumerable lights of Sheffield, as we drive into its smoky and resounding realms, and one more beautiful picture is added to the gallery of memory.

S.-P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

BOOK CHAT.

THE *Psychic Mirror*, which is sent to us from J. Thomas, 10 Sefton-street, Longsight, Manchester, is a curious publication. It deals in the occult, and its assertions are sufficiently startling. The writer says (we quote *verbatim et literatim*): "My first point is, that there are, at this day, Ten thousand men—Androgynous—now on this earth, who have not tasted death, who live the life immortal, in bodies that have never seen corruption!" After this we are not surprised to read of the common lime tree: "My soul perceives a hallowed mystery about this tree, which renders it uneque" (*sic*). Certainly the *Psychic Mirror* is "uneque."

* * *

Gems of Thought, by Jos. M. Wade (H. A. Copley, Canning Town, E.; 2d.), is another strange production. It takes as its motto: "Believe nothing, accept nothing because another says it is true. Follow no one. Do not accept what I write; but you will either search all things, the inner consciousness being the judge, or you will remain in occult darkness." This is a pure gem, so we must give another as a touchstone of the writer's quality: "There is no more relationship between a mother and her son than there is between her and a Hottentot; we come direct from mother earth." We have never doubted that there were minds around us in the animistic stage ready to receive Theosophy, any more than we doubt that others are in the stage of fetishism, prepared to believe in spells and amulets. Indeed, all religion is but a survival of these old-world faiths.

* * *

Passages of the Bible Chosen for their Literary Beauty and Interest, by J. G. Frazer, is notable on account of the author, whose *Golden Bough* shows he is in a position to understand the underlying superstition of Jewish literature. The interest of the book is increased by Mr. Frazer's erudite notes, giving numerous references to parallel stories and passages found in ancient and modern literature, and illustrating some Hebrew legends and customs from the folk-lore of other peoples.

* * *

The *Bookman* announces that a biography of the late Professor W. Robertson Smith, author of *The Religion of the Semites*, has been undertaken by one of his most intimate friends.

* * *

The *Academy* (August 24), noticing under the head of "Regeneration" the new edition of Max Nordau's *Conventional Lies*, says the book "seems to be well worth reading," and mentions that the reader should remember that it has been published for some ten years, in order to do it the full justice which it deserves.

* * *

The *Hamilton Advertiser* mentions Mr. David Dall, of Motherwell, as having in the press a work on *The Mistakes of the Bible*. If he goes into his subject fully, we should say it would make a considerable volume.

Sunday Amusements.

The only ground on which restrictions on Sunday amusements can be defended, must be that they are religiously wrong—a motive of legislation which can never be too earnestly protested against. "*Deorum injuriarum Diis curae.*" It remains to be proved that society, or any of its officers, holds a commission from on high to avenge any supposed offence to Omnipotence which is not also a wrong to our fellow creatures. The notion that it is one man's duty that another should be religious was the foundation of all the religious persecutions ever perpetrated, and if admitted would fully justify them.—*J. S. Mill "On Liberty."*

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY

THE gaols, penitentiaries, and asylums are overflowing in all Christian countries, and the great majority of their inmates profess belief in the Christian religion. The questions might probably be asked: Why so much godlessness in that which claims to be Christian? Where is the divinity of a religion that does not save its members from a hell of mental chaos here, and what warrant have they, therefore, that it can save them from hell hereafter? It is plain that Christianity has not substantiated its claim to divinity.

Christians think that they are sanctified and holy because they have avowed "Christ and him crucified," and attend church regularly, and observe its ordinances. It never strikes them that the ignorance of their preachers in joining together lust-and-sin-cursed people in the bonds of wedlock, for a fee, is responsible for many of the existing evils; and that the superstitious and incomprehensible dogmas inculcated by them, which keep the people from thinking for themselves, and realising their responsibility for everything they think and do, are largely responsible for the remaining evils. The intelligence and judgment of the age have advanced too far for people to be satisfied with the ignorant claim that a God or Devil outside of man shapes the destinies of the individual and the world.

The claims of orthodoxy have, in these latter days, been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Its power henceforth must wane, for the Light of Truth has judged its claims and found them wanting.

—*World's Advance Thought.*

LUCY A. MALLORY.

A Chinese View of Christian Missions.

A Washington telegram states that Mr. Moy, one of the secretaries of the Chinese Legation, in an interview with a reporter respecting recent events in China, said: "While we have no statistics available, I believe, and so does the minister, that there are few, if any, converts to Christianity among the higher class of Chinese. Our religion is that of Confucius, and that is good enough for us. No decent Chinaman will have anything to do with the missions. The missionaries cannot talk the language, and none of the better people of China speak English. Only criminals have learned it whom the missionaries have engaged as interpreters. There are only two ways to get converts in China. One way is to hire them, and then they are converts as long as they are paid; the other way is the kidnapping of children. The hiring of converts is an expensive business, but the missions are well supplied with the money, and hire and kidnap, and show the results. The interpreter will find a girl whose parents are poor. He persuades the child to visit the mission, and then tells the missionary she desires to be a Christian. He is unable to talk to her, but keeps her secluded, and the interpreter bullies her. She practically becomes the latter's slave, and remains so until he sells her, perhaps for a vile life outside. This is the reason for the belief among the Chinese that the missions kidnap the children."—*Dalziel.*

Children and Early Faiths.

The following actual conversation, recorded when it took place (August 20, 1895), may possibly throw some light upon the faiths of early man. At any rate, I think it worth preserving. *Scene*—Atop a tramcar; a starry night. *Dramatis Personæ*—A boy nearly six years old and a child-like lady. Boy (after looking at the stars)—"Who keeps all the world?" Lady—"What do you mean?" Boy—"There must be a man to look after it." Lady—"It must be a pretty big man." Boy—"Who looked after the world before we came here? If papa kept the world, he'd have lots of money." (He looked pleased, as if he thought "I should share.") Lady—"Yes." Boy—"How many measures would measure to the stars?" Lady—"I'm sure I don't know. They are very, very far off." Boy—"If I had all the measures in the world, could I measure to the stars?" The lady said she did not know, and the conversation changed to mundane matters, much to the regret of the lady's husband, who is not the boy's father, but who is anxious to know if he will turn out a theologian or a philosopher. He seems to be getting through the theological stage early.—*J. M. W.*

They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

—*James Russell Lowell.*

RESPONDENCE.

"ANANIAS AGAIN."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A correspondent forwards me a copy of the *Freethinker* of June 30, headed "Ananias Again," in which Mr. Hugh Price Hughes is violently attacked. The paragraph professes to be taken from the *Liberator*. There is an error here which I cannot explain, but I shall be obliged if you will allow me to inform your readers that the paragraph in question never appeared in the paper of which I am editor. Thanking you in advance for making the correction,

HOWARD EVANS (Editor of the *Liberator*).

[There is more than one *Liberator* in the world. The paper we quoted from is edited by Mr. Joseph Symes at Melbourne, and is well known—at least by name—to most of our readers.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

WHERE IS GOD?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In May, 1882, I had a brush with the leading Anglo-Israelites, whose operations I designated as a *swindle*. They were then raising money by subscription in order to dig for the Ark of the Covenant in the potato fields at Tara, Ireland. The Ark may be there with old Yaveh inside (*qui sait*), for *God is everywhere*. At any rate, thirteen years have elapsed, but all the digging has produced neither God nor Ark, which is more than passing strange. I summed up the whole thing in a few words, which were reproduced in *British Israel and Judah's Prophetic Messenger*. "Bamboozling the residuum of society and dragging money out of the pockets of the silliest of silly yokels." Dr. C. Hodson Rugg, of 1 Grove-road, St. John's Wood, gave me the following terrible warning: "One can imagine what the shrieks from his sufferings will be when the horrible abyss opens out and engulphs him (Laporte) in the realms of Pluto. Further comment is unnecessary, more than to pray that such a character as Charles Kroll Laporte may be brought to repentance; if not, prevented from infusing his malignant venom in the blood of truth" (*sic*).

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

Christian Results.

After nearly two thousand years of Christian teaching and discipline, how much nearer are we to that ideal life which Christian leading was to bring us to? What must we think of the sentiment implied in the saying of a glorified prince, repeated by a popular emperor, lauding "blood and iron—a remedy which never fails"? . . . How much moralisation can we trace in the contrast between the practice of savages whose maxim in their inter-tribal feuds is "Life for Life," and the practice of Christian nations who in their dealings with weak peoples take as their maxim "For one life many lives"? Towards the foretold state, when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, how much have we progressed, now that there exist bigger armies than ever existed before? And where are the indications of increased brotherly love in the doings of Christian nations in Africa, where, like hungry dogs round a carcase, they tear out piece after piece, pausing only to snarl and snap at one another?—*Herbert Spencer*.

An account of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, given by Mr. T. C. Owens, an eye-witness, in the *English Churchman* (August 22), cites an incident that has not always been mentioned: "About a score of women, 'saints,' so called 'cousins,' taken from the fishwomen of Naples, who pretend to trace their genealogy from the saint, and who are considered as having his blood flowing in their veins, assembled at the high altar rails and occupied themselves in loud cries and entreaties. By degrees they became very vociferous, calling furiously on the saint in tones of anger and despair."

Some specimens translated from the Italian by a Neapolitan are given as illustrations of these primitive prayers: "Champion of Christ, you are a pretty saint; make your blood melt." "You yellow-faced rascal, why don't you make your blood melt?" "You yellow-faced scoundrel, how spiteful you are!" "What is the use of my having prayed to you all my life, if you don't make your blood melt?" "I'll never pray to you again if you won't make your blood melt."

A Little Omission.

What! the legislators of the Indians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans all taught the immortality of the soul, which we find in twenty places even in Homer, and yet the pretended Moses does not speak of it. Not a single word is said of it, either in the Jewish Decalogue or in the Pentateuch. It became necessary for commentators, who were either very ignorant or more inclined to knavery than folly, to twist some passages of Job, who was not a Jew, in order to make it believed by men more ignorant than themselves that Job had spoken of a future life, because he said: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job xix. 25). What connection is there, I pray you, between a sick man who is suffering, but hopes to be cured, and the immortality of the soul, hell, and paradise? If Warburton had contented himself with proving that the Jewish law did not mention a future life, he would have rendered a very great service. But, by the most incomprehensible madness, he wished to have it believed that the stupidity of the Pentateuch was a proof of its divinity, and his excessive pride supported this chimera with the most intolerant insolence.

What! the innumerable number of citizens that have been injured, excommunicated, reduced to beggary, killed, and their bodies cast on the highway; the number of princes dethroned and assassinated, has not yet opened men's eyes! And when we do open them, we perceive that this fatal idol is not yet demolished!

But what shall we substitute in its place, say you? What? A ferocious animal has sucked the blood of my relatives. I tell you to rid yourselves of this beast, and you ask me what you shall put in its place! Is it you that put this question to me? Then you are a hundred times more odious than the Pagan pontiffs, who permitted themselves to enjoy tranquility among their ceremonies and sacrifices, who did not attempt to enslave the mind by dogmas, who never disputed the powers of the magistrates, and who introduced no discord among mankind. You have the face to ask what you must substitute in the place of your fables? I answer you, "God, truth, virtue, laws, rewards and punishments." Preach probity, and do not preach dogmas; be the priests of God, and not the priests of a man.—*Voltire*.

PROFANE JOKES.

A Rev. Dr., introducing a brother reverend to his congregation, said: "Our brother will now address you on 'Hell,' and it affords me pleasure to say he is full of his subject."

"Did you enjoy the services at church to-day?" "Very little. The music wasn't a bit catchy, and there were no clever lines in the sermon. The minister threw in a little bright business, however, and that saved the entertainment from being utterly stupid."

A Scotch wife, whose man had recently died, was urged by her minister to dry her tears and reconcile herself to the loss. "You know," said the minister, "that we must all die, even Christ had to die when he took upon himself our mortal flesh." "Dae ye tell me," said she in dismay, "that Christ's deid. I never knew that till the now." "Dear me," said the minister, "to think that in the nineteenth century it would be possible to meet with such ignorance." "You see," said she, apologetically, "John was aye that hard that he would never spend a ha'penny on an evening paper, and a body never had the chance o' kenning wha wis deid."

On Missionary Ground.

Good Lady—"Now, little boy; who made you?"
First Kinky-headed Boy (with a charming, toothy smile)—
"Dunno'm."

Lady—"God made you, child."

First Boy—"Yes'm."

Lady (to Second Boy)—"Who was the meekest man?"

Second Boy—"Dunno'm."

Lady—"Why, Moses! Moses was the meekest man. You must really try to remember Moses, for I shall ask you again."

Second Boy—"Yes'm."

Lady (to Third Boy)—"Who was the strongest man?"

Third Boy—"Dunno'm."

Lady—"Why, I told you last Sunday! Samson! Samson!"

Third Boy—"Yes'm."

Lady (recapitulating)—"Now, tell me who made you?"

Second Boy—"Moses."

Lady (in despair)—"Oh, no! no!"

Second Boy—"Yes'm, Moses did make me. Dat ar boy what Gord made, he done gone to get er drink."

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.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, S. P. Putnam, Colonel Ingersoll and American Freethought.
 BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8, social gathering for members and friends.
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, J. Rowney, "Prophecy."
 ISLINGTON (19 Alwyne-road): 3.15, members' quarterly meeting.
 WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Stephen H. Alison, "Darwinism and Design."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. G. Hertzfeld will lecture.
 CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, James Rowney, "Waldron's Blunders."
 CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "How Christianity Became Strong."
 DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.
 EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Hereafter."
 FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, W. Heaford, "The Doctrine of Prayer"; 3.15, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Civilisation."
 HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, W. J. Ramsey will lecture. Thursday, at 8.30, St. John will lecture.
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, S. E. Easton will lecture.
 ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, St. John will lecture.
 KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist."
 KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity Critically Examined."
 LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, E. Pack will lecture.
 MILE END WASTE: 11.30, R. Forder, "Religion and Progress."
 OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Voltaire."
 REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. Heaford, "Christianity or Secularism—Which?"
 VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, S. R. Thompson will lecture; 8.15, Mr. Vining will lecture.
 WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection"; 7, S. R. Thompson will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, H. Snell, "Was Christ a Socialist?" 7, "The Gospel of Freethought."
 BLACKBURY: 3, business meeting at secretary's house.
 CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.
 DERRY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, H. McGuinness, "The Unemployed."
 LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Sam Reeves (Fabian), "What Capital Is, and What Capital is Not."
 MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "The Great French Revolution—Part I, The Night"; 6.30, "An Hour with the Devil."
 NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, George Selkirk, "The Bible against Itself."
 PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall, Frankfort-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 8, "Christianity: its Birth, Rise, and Death"; 7, "Does Death End All?—with Special Reference to the Fallacy of Theosophy."
 SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, select entertainment.
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting.
 STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 3, important meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (Open Market, James-street): 6.30, John Grange, "Can Christ Save Us?"
 BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, a lecture.
 CHATHAM (corner of the New Brompton-road, High-street): 11.15, C. James, "The Decay of Christianity"; 7, "God at the Bar of Humanity."
 DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.
 MANCHESTER (Stephenson-square): 3, C. Cohen will lecture.
 NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—Sept. 1, 8, and 15, Manchester; 22 and 29, Birmingham.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 1, m. Kingsland, a. Finsbury Park; 8, m. Camberwell, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell; 15, m. Finsbury, e. Edmonton; 22, m. Kingsland, e. Deptford; 25, Hyde Park; 26, Hammersmith; 29, m. Victoria Park, a. Finsbury Park, e. Kilburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—Sept. 1, m. Wood Green, e. Tottenham; 8, Westminster; 15, Mile End; 22, Camberwell; 29, Westminster. October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 8, m. Kingsland, e. Edmonton; 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 29, e. Edmonton.

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