

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

PEACE ON EARTH.

THE Christians all over the world have been celebrating the birth of Christ. According to the fantastic stories of that probably fictitious event, which we find in the New Testament, a choir of angels came from heaven—or wherever else they reside, when they are at home—and regaled the ears of some theatrical shepherds with celestial music. Their song was of “peace on earth,” and, after singing this delectable anthem, they “spread their sheeny vans for flight,” and returned to the place where that ironical composition originated.

There *was* peace on earth for some time afterwards. Historians differ as to the character of Augustus Cæsar, but there is only one opinion as to his statesmanship. He ruled the Empire wisely, and kept the peace within its wide borders; and he did this with an army which would be regarded as ridiculously small in the Christian Europe of to-day. Augustus Cæsar was a mere Pagan. He died without knowing that God Almighty had become incarnate in a little Jew boy. He owed nothing to the Bible, as far as it was then written. His knowledge and wisdom were as entirely natural, yet he managed the government of that colossal empire in a fashion which has scarcely, if ever, been equalled by any Christian monarch. The peace he kept was not the peace of God, but the peace of common sense.

Augustus Cæsar and the great emperors who succeeded him are now but names of “the mighty dead.” The Roman Empire has long been dead and buried; and out of its tomb arose the Catholic Church, which, as was finely said by Hobbes, is but its ghost sitting throned and crowned upon its grave. Christianity triumphed over Paganism. A new Europe came into existence, broken up into many nationalities, each having its special form of Christian faith, its Church and priesthood. For many centuries the sway of Christianity has been supreme and (except theoretically) undisputed. And where is the “peace” which it was to inaugurate on this distracted and blood-stained planet?

Millions of soldiers are ready for war in Europe. Huge factories turn out tremendous guns, warranted to hurl shot or explosives seven or eight miles. Rifles are produced in myriads every year. Powder follows powder, and bullet follows bullet, in the competition of destruction. Battle ships grow bigger and bigger, carrying in their huge bellies the agencies for annihilating whole cities; and torpedo boats are every year becoming swifter and deadlier, so that the next naval engagement promises to be something over which the world may sicken.

The Christian nations of Europe hate each other. Not a particle of love is lost between any two of them. It is not affection, but fear, that keeps them from fighting. They dread the consequences of war. That alone prevents them from translating hatred into murder.

But if they dread war in Europe, they are free to gratify

their taste for it abroad. The principal Christian powers of Europe are fighting and thieving all over the world. If you read their protocols and diplomatic correspondences, you would imagine that they were animated by the highest motives; in fact, that they were perfect Don Quixotes of cosmopolitan morality. They remind one of Byron's Lambro, who was

The mildest-mannered man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.

But when you look at their deeds, you see they are partisans of the brotherhood of Cain and Abel. From one pocket they take money for the conversion of the heathen, and with money from another pocket they fit out expeditions to slay the heathen and steal their territory—especially when it contains gold, the love of which their sacred Book says is the root of all evil.

South America has a number of Christian states calling themselves Republics. Revolutions are nearly as common there as earthquakes, and savage butchery is the common rule in these domestic quarrels. Even the United States—the home of oppressed freedom, and all the rest of it—mean to be well in front in the race of warfare. The Republic is spending a hundred million dollars on fresh ironclads—and all the time people are living, or rather dying, in misery in New York, Chicago, and every other great centre of population.

The new year opens badly after the Christmas cant about peace and goodwill. The tension is so great that the raid of a few hundred men on the Transvaal very nearly kindled a blaze of war in Europe; and the way in which Englishmen and Germans are writing about each other, so soon after Christmas, shows the restraining and elevating influence of their common Christianity.

It is no answer to say that Christianity does not produce all this warlike fever, all this mutual hatred and malevolence. The fact remains that Christianity does not prevent it. This religion is a ghastly failure. “Ouida” is right in maintaining that, unlike many other religions, it has never taken any real hold upon mankind. It is an impossible creed. It aims at the stars, and hits nothing. For nearly a thousand years it has had the fullest opportunity of producing its natural effect upon the people of Europe. It has had wealth, privilege, and power; the services of myriads of trained preachers, and the absolute control of education. And so far as “peace” is concerned, its influence has been nil, if not positively a minus quantity.

Whether the future is to have a religion or not, it is certain that anything based on natural wisdom and human brotherhood would be better than Christianity. The religion of love is preferable to the love of religion. To promote it is a sublime undertaking; to make it prevail is the salvation of mankind. Meanwhile we have Christianity in possession of the field, barring the advent of a superior system. To destroy Christianity, therefore, is the supreme task of every real reformer.

G. W. FOOTE.

A MISERABLE BEING.

THEOSOPHISTS, in their re-hash of Hinduism, outbid the *post-mortem* promises of Christians, and offer their votaries nothing less than the expectation of becoming gods. This, as Mr. G. H. Pember, who holds that Theosophy is one of the devices of Satan in these latter days, notes, is the very same temptation as that held out to Eve. It has no attraction for me. If told that, by solemn concentration of will, I could jump to godhood at once, I would decline the experiment. I don't keep a god, and don't want to be one; I keep a dog, and that, at present, is sufficient responsibility for me.

If ever there was an unenviable being, I should say it was the orthodox deity. He has the whole responsibility of creation, and is apparently unable to help it in the slightest. At any rate, he does nothing, and he has had an eternity of idleness. Creation, as Cardinal Newman says, is, comparatively speaking, but of yesterday; it has lasted a poor six thousand years, say sixty thousand if you will, or six million, or six million million; what is this to eternity? Nothing at all; not so much as a drop compared to the whole ocean, or a grain of sand to the whole earth." And throughout eternity the Almighty has had nothing to do but contemplate the infinity of his own glory.

Cardinal Newman, who realises the incomprehensibility of his deity, speaking of his vast and eternal solitude, brought it in contrast with that of criminals driven mad by solitary confinement. He says:—

"Which of us, or how few of us, could live a week in comfort by ourselves? You have heard, my brethren, of solitary confinement as a punishment assigned to criminals, and at length it becomes more severe than any other punishment; it is said at length to drive men mad. We cannot live without objects, without aims, without employments, without companions. We cannot live simply in ourselves; the mind preys upon itself, is left to itself. This is the case with us mortal men; now raise your minds to God. Oh, the vast contrast! He lived a whole eternity in that state, of which a few poor years to us is madness. He lived a whole eternity without change of any kind. Day and night, sleep and meal time, at least are changes, unavoidable changes, in the life of the most solitary on earth. A prison, if it has nothing else to relieve its dreariness and its hopelessness, has at least this, that the poor prisoner sleeps; he sleeps and suspends his misery; he sleeps and recruits his power of bearing it; but the Eternal is the Sleepless."

Poor God has no wife, companion, or friend. He is said to have a Son; but, then, the Son is as old as and, indeed, the same as Himself, so that even with the Eternal Ghost he cannot be said to have much company to spend eternity with. The highest of His creatures is infinitely removed from him, and can as little be his companion as the animalcules in water can be those of man. And then he has all the trouble of his creatures to attend to.

I am no pessimist. I admit things are improvable. But, looking back over the long course of human history, what do I see? It is a long red record of blood and tears. The mass of men and women have ever been slaves. But to read of the treatment of slaves and the tortures of martyrs brings agony to any sensitive nature. A callous Atheist cannot even think of what men, women, and children have had to endure without shuddering and tears. And God saw it all. He witnesses all the sins, sorrows, and sufferings of the world. He has to listen to the cries of despairing men, women, and children drowning in agony, while some brave Miranda cries:—

Oh, I have suffered
With those I saw suffer: a brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dashed all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perished.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or ere
It should the good ship so have swallowed, and
The fraughting souls within her.

God sees every crime committed—nay, in some sense, he is at the bottom of them all. He has to put up with all the stupidity of his creatures. He has to listen to the conflicting prayers of the farmer who wants rain, and the brickmaker who wants fine weather. He sees the wrangling of sects, the quarrels of religion; and, unless plentifully endowed with the saving grace of humor, must surely view the mass of his creatures with contempt, and long to abdicate from the government of a world which, in the eyes of Omniscience, is so sorry a failure.

The records of revelation conspicuously confirm this view. God creates man perfect, and he betrays his imperfection at the first temptation. What the Deity pronounced good he soon had to curse. Turning his creatures out of Eden did not suffice; nor did drowning all save one family. His own chosen people were always turning from him to other gods. When he sent his only begotten Son he was put to a cruel death—his own received him not. The Prince of Peace brought strife and religious wars in his train, and after all this time is still rejected by the majority of the human race, including his own particular people. 'Tis a pitiable record for Omnipotence.

"Oh," says the Christian, "all your flippant blasphemy is founded on the vain notion that you understand something of God." Upon what, then, I ask, are all religious teachings founded? I take simply the postulates which religionists assign to their deity, and speculate upon them after my own fashion. If I drive you to the confession that God is unknown, I ask how, then, can he be trusted? If nothing can be known of him, the only safe policy is silence. But, if the Theist forms God after his own image, and speculates as to his sentiments concerning mankind, why should not I do so also? Granted that God feels as man feels—which is the assumption of all theology—and the speculation of Nietzsche, that God died through a broken heart from compassion for the sufferings of his creatures, becomes feasible. Nietzsche would have a race of Uebermenschen step into the shoes of the defunct deity. But who are fit for the task? For myself, I would say, as I said at first: Not just at present, thank you; I've a dog to look after.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE.

PROFESSOR N. S. SHALER, of America, has written an article in the *Homiletic Review* (U.S.) with a view of proving that "the conflict between Christianity and Science is a thing of the past," and that this result has been brought about through the influence of "the Christian religion, embodying, as it does, the motive of sympathy and the moral code that relates thereto."

It may be that the battle which for centuries continued between science and the Christian Church is over, simply because the Church has been thoroughly defeated in all her attacks upon the many strongholds of science. The cessation, however, of the fierce and protracted struggle is not due to the Christian love of peace, for theologians held on in their determined opposition to scientific discovery as long as they possibly could, and they only yielded when they found that the very existence of their Church was at stake. As Tyndall observes, "Against the benefits which religious associations have conferred upon humanity stands a vast debt of committed wrong." It is impossible to adequately describe the evil produced upon society through the persistent interference upon the part of professed Christians with the efforts of scientific men. In commenting upon the persecution of Roger Bacon by the Church, Dr. Andrew Dickson White writes: "Sad it is to think of what this great man might have given to the world had the world not refused his gift. He held the key of treasures which would have freed mankind from ages of error and misery. With his discoveries as a basis, with his method as a guide, what might not the world have gained? Nor was this wrong done to that age alone; it was done to this age also. The nineteenth century was robbed at the same time with the thirteenth. But for that interference with science, the nineteenth century would, without doubt, be enjoying discoveries which will not be reached before the twentieth century. Thousands of precious lives shall be lost in this century, tens of thousands shall suffer discomfort, privation, sickness, poverty, ignorance, for lack of discoveries and methods which, but for this mistaken religious fight against Bacon and his compeers, would now be blessing the earth..... Put together all the efforts of all the Atheists who have ever lived, and they have not done so much harm to Christianity and the world as has been done by the narrow-minded, conscientious men who persecuted Roger Bacon and closed the path which he gave his life to open" (*The Warfare of Science*, pp. 93, 94).

Professor Shaler has the following pertinent remarks upon the nature of the battle that was waged by the Church against science: "On the side of the men of science it was claimed, in effect, that the interpretation of nature set forth in the tenets of the Church was unreasonable, or, at least, insufficient to account for the facts; on the other hand, the defenders of the faith claimed that the scientific view denied the inspired account of creation, deposed intelligence from its control of the universe, and destroyed the beliefs on which alone it was possible to found the moral conduct of the individual or the safety of the social order. The natural issue of these contentions, waged as they were with mediæval bitterness, was the institution of an enduring feud between the followers of the two interpretations of nature." A strong, and, we think, a justifiable, indictment is then made against the Church of Rome, which, we are told, "made free use of coercive methods in the suppression of scientific opinions."

The Roman Catholics, however, were not alone in their persistent opposition to scientific discoveries. The Professor says: "The Protestant Churches, though less imperious in their method, had their own effective ways of administering discipline to the men of the new interpretation. Social pressure to the point of ostracism was often used to defeat the activities of those who were suspected of heresy in their opinions as to the organisation of the world." This is quite true, for, as Draper states, "so far as science is concerned, nothing is owed to the Reformation.....The two rival divisions of the Christian Church—Protestant and Catholic—were thus in accord on one point: to tolerate no science except such as they considered to be agreeable to the Scriptures" (*Conflict*, pp. 215-217). Both Luther and Melancthon condemned Copernicus, and, since their time, other Protestants have been equally bitter in their condemnation of men of science. Priestley, Lyell, Simpson, Darwin, Huxley, and others, have all been victims of orthodox bigotry. In 1864 certain Protestants in England drew up a declaration for the signature of scientific students, expressing "sincere regret that researches into scientific truth are perverted by some in our time into occasion for casting doubt upon the truth and authenticity of the Holy Scripture." In 1874 the Rev. Dr. Hodge denounced Darwin most violently, and said that his science was "a denial of every article of the Christian faith." Bishop Cummins, and a host of other "lights" of the "reformed Church," joined in this denunciation. Well might Dr. White write that "warfare against science is to be guarded against in Protestant countries, not less than in Catholic."

While differing but little from Professor Shaler in his indictment against professed Christians for their opposition to science, we take a decided exception to his claim that the victory of science is to be credited to Christianity. This is in no sense in accordance with facts, inasmuch as no one can cite any words ascribed to Jesus that express any sympathy with science or with scientific men. On the contrary, many of his dogmatic declarations are directly opposed to the great and essential principle that underlies all science—namely, free and unfettered thought—the unrestricted exercise of the human understanding. It is unjustly to talk, as the Professor does, of science and Christianity being "reconciled" because of its "embodying the motive of sympathy and the moral code that relates thereto." Is it not absurd to speak of sympathy as being the foundation of a system that was originally meant only for the lost sheep of Israel, a people having but little or no sympathy with the Samaritans, and no fellowship with the great unnumbered Gentile world? It is not, as the Professor seems to think, a question of policy or of interpretation that has to be considered in this supposed "reconciliation," but it would necessitate the harmonising of absolute contradictions, and the disposal of facts that are really antagonistic to Christian teachings. We allege that this has not been accomplished, and we fail to see how it ever can be; therefore, to talk about Christianity and science having been reconciled is to speak of an event that has never happened. There are two ways of ending a battle: the first, by the forces on the one side being beaten; and the second, by one side giving the battle up, thinking it impossible to win. Christians have adopted the latter plan, for the simple reason that they found themselves unable to overcome the batteries of science.

Christianity and modern science have always been, and are still, diametrically opposed to each other. Suppose men of science were to sincerely act up to the following

Christian teachings: Pray without ceasing; take no thought for their lives; seek first the kingdom of God; love not the world; set their affections on things above; sell all they had, in order to be perfect, and place implicit faith in the prayer of supplication—we say, if scientists believed these New Testament injunctions, and consistently acted upon such a belief, what would become of their biology, geology, astronomy, chemistry, anatomy, and the other sciences? Demonstrated truths cannot be made to accommodate themselves to the fancies and conjectures of believers in Jesus, however sincere they may be. Assumptions that originated in ages of ignorance and superstition have nothing in common with the science of the present time. The human mind of the nineteenth century soars beyond the narrow confines of Christianity. Mental freedom will no longer be fettered with the delusion that reliance on Christ is "the one thing needful"; hence the leading men and women of thought are desirous to

Seize upon truth where'er it is found,
On Christian or on Heathen ground:
The flower's divine where'er it grows.

CHARLES WATTS.

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH ON THE BIBLE.

(Concluded from p. 11.)

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH has worse charges to bring against the Old Testament than the unhistorical character of its records. Such examples as the slaughter of the Canaanites, the killing of Sisera, the assassination of Eglon, the hewing of Agag in pieces by Samuel before the Lord, Elijah's massacre of the prophets of Baal, the hanging of Haman with his ten sons commemorated in the hideous feast of Purim, have, as Professor Smith points out, had a deplorable effect in forming the harsher and darker parts of the character which calls itself Christian. They are responsible, he says, "in no small degree for murderous persecutions, and for the extirpation or oppression of heathen races. The dark side of the Puritan character in particular is traceable to their influence. Macaulay mentions a fanatical Scotch Calvinist whose writings, he says, hardly bear a trace of acquaintance with the New Testament."

This is where Professor Smith runs a little off the rails. He would fain dis sever Christianity from Judaism, ascribing everything that is meritorious to the former, and all that is repugnant to the latter. Yet nothing is more certain than that Christianity is founded on Judaism; that to Jesus and his apostles the Old Testament alone was scripture; that the peculiar claim for Jesus is that he is the son of the murderous and adulterous David. And the spirit of persecution which follows exclusive claims of divinity is countenanced by such texts as, "Those that would not that I should reign over them bring hither and slay before me"; "If any angel from heaven bring any other doctrine, let him be accursed"; "If any come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

The Jewish spirit of persecution, which Dr. Smith "scunners" at, was much intensified by the Christian doctrine of eternal hell. The text, "He that believeth not shall be damned," has caused more suffering and bloodshed than any cited by Mr. Smith from the Old Testament.

Many, too, of the objections raised by Dr. Goldwin Smith are as applicable to the New Testament as to the Old. He says, for instance: "The books of the Old Testament, and notably the historical books, are for the most part by unknown authors and of unknown dates." Exactly the same can be said of the Gospels. If Joshua cites the book of Jasher, Jesus himself appeals to the stories of Daniel and Jonah, and Paul treats the mythical story of the Fall as historical fact. If we are at liberty, as Dr. Smith urges, to reject the story of Moses and the Midianites, surely we may also reject those of Jesus cursing the fig-tree and sending devils among the pigs. Dr. Smith objects to the New Testament being bound up with the Old, as though its religion were the same. Yet, on the very first page of the New Testament, it will be found that all was done to fulfil prophecies found in the Old Testament. Proceed but a little further, and Jesus is made to say: "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets:

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

"What is the Old Testament?" asks Mr. Smith. "It is the entire body of Hebrew literature, theology, philosophy, history, fiction, and poetry, including the poetry of love as well as that of religion. We have bound it all up together as a single book, and bound up that book with the New Testament, as though the religion of the two were the same, and the slaughter of the Canaanites or the massacre of the day of Purim were a step towards Christian brotherhood and the Sermon on the Mount. We have forcibly turned Hebrew literature into a sort of cryptogram of Christianity. The love-song called the Song of Solomon has been turned into a cryptogrammatic description of the union of Christ with his Church. A certain divine, when his advice was asked about the method of reading the Scriptures, used to say that his method was to begin at the beginning and read to the end; so that he would spend three hours at least on the Old Testament for one that he spent on the New, and would read the list of the Dukes of Edom as often as he read the Sermon on the Mount. The first step towards a rational appreciation of the Old Testament is to break up the volume, separate the acts of Joshua or Jehu from the teachings of Jesus, and the different books of the Old Testament from each other.

"The language of the Jews was the same as that of the other inhabitants of Canaan, and it seems probable that their religion also was originally the same. This view appears more likely and more consistent with analogy than the supposition that the Jews, having set out with tribal monotheism, fell away from it to fetishism, idolatry, and to the worship of the powers of nature, with sensual rites. We are told, in fact (Joshua xxiv. 2), that the ancestors of Abraham served other gods. How, or by what influences, whether those of individual reformers like the prophets, or of general circumstance, the nation rose from fetishism and nature-worship to tribal monotheism of an eminently pure and exalted type, seems to be a historical mystery. Higher than tribal monotheism it did not rise; at least, it advanced no further than to the belief that its god was supreme in power as well as in character to all other gods, and thus Lord of the whole earth. He was still the God of Israel, and the Jews were still his chosen people. Judaism, therefore, never reached the religious elevation of some chosen spirits among the heathen, such as Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus."

Dr. Smith allows the influence of the Old Testament on the Gospel writers. He says: "The Evangelists, simple-minded, find in the sacred books of their nation prognostications of the character and mission of Jesus. Sometimes, as critical examination shows, a little has been enough to satisfy their uncritical minds" (see Matthew ii. 16; xxi. 5). Yet, as Dr. Smith admits, "no real and specific prediction of the advent of Jesus, or of any event in his life, can be produced from the books of the Old Testament." So that Christianity, built upon the Old Testament, is built on a false interpretation of it.

Dr. Smith says: "The American slave-holder could appeal to the Old Testament as a warrant for his institution." He knows that the slave-holder could, and did, equally appeal to the New, since Jesus, though surrounded by slavery, never denounced it, while Peter says: "Slaves (*Δουλοι*), be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward"; and Paul says: "Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh."

Dr. Smith, in conclusion, urges that, whatever other merits the Hebrew books may have, "the time has surely come when as a supernatural revelation they should be frankly though reverently laid aside, and no more allowed to cloud the vision of free inquiry, or to cast the shadow of primeval religion and law over our modern life." We entirely agree with Dr. Smith, and work to that end. But we extend the application of his principles beyond Judaism to the Christianity built upon it.

Mamma (to little daughter)—"Never forget to thank God for everything, my child." Child—"If I didn't like it, too?" Mamma—"Yes, always; everything is for the best." Child (running in an hour later)—"Mamma, thank God I've broke the new pitcher."

INGERSOLL ON VIVISECTION.

COLONEL ROBERT G. INGERSOLL comes out against vivisection in most emphatic terms. Being interested in the commendable work of the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, he has written an appendix to *Personal Experiences*, a book of which Phillip G. Peabody, A.M., LL.B., President of the Society, is the author. Colonel Ingersoll says in part:—

Vivisection is the disgrace and the shame of some of the sciences.

Sometimes it has seemed to me that cruelty is the climate of all crimes, and that generosity is the spring, summer, and autumn of all virtues. Every form of wickedness, of meanness, springs from selfishness—that is to say, from cruelty.

Every good man hates and despises the wretch who abuses wife and child, who rules by curses and blows, and makes his home a kind of hell.

So, no generous man wishes to associate with one who overworks his horse, and feeds the lean and fainting beast with blows. These acts are the evidence of a cruel disposition; of a narrow and ignorant hatred; of a nature without sympathy.

The barbarian delights in inflicting pain on his enemy, or on any living thing within his power. He loves to see his victim bleed. But the civilised man staunches blood, binds up wounds, and assuages pain. He pities the suffering animal, as well as the suffering man. He would no more inflict mortal wounds on a dog than on a human being. The heart of the civilised man speaks for the dumb and takes the side of the helpless.

A good man would no more think of flaying a living animal than of murdering his mother.

It is wonderful that it ever occurred to any human being to dissect any living animal; to so fasten a horse or a dog that he cannot resist, and then to proceed to cut him in pieces, for the purpose of ascertaining certain facts that by no possibility can be of real use to any human being. It is still more wonderful that anybody ever did this.

The man who cuts a hoof from a living horse is capable of committing any crime which does not require courage. Such an experiment can be of no use. Hoofs are not cut from living horses for the benefit of the animals. No case can arise in which it would be necessary or proper to cut away a hoof, any more than it would be proper to behead the animal to cure some disease.

Think of the pain inflicted by separating the hoof from the flesh. If the poor beast could speak, what would he say? The same knowledge can be obtained by cutting away the hoof of a dead horse. Every ligament can be ascertained, the anatomy understood, by practising on the dead. Knowledge of every bone and vein, of every cartilage and joint, can be obtained by the dissection of those who have ceased to feel.

"But," says the biologist, "we must dissect the living."

Well, millions of living animals have been cut in pieces. Millions of experiments have been tried. All the nerves have been touched. Every possible agony has been inflicted, and many volumes have been published, filled with the cruelties of these experiments, giving all the details and the results. People who are curious about such things can read these reports. There is no need of repeating such savage experiments.

It is now known how long a dog can live with all the pores of his skin closed; how long he can survive the loss of his skin, or a portion of his brain, or one or both of his kidneys, or a part of his intestines, or do without his liver, and there is no necessity of mangling thousands of other dogs to substantiate what is already known.

Of what possible use is it to know just how long an animal can live without food, without water; at what time he becomes insane from thirst, or blind, or deaf? Who but a fiend would try such experiments? And, if they have been tried, why should not all the fiends be satisfied with the report of the fiends who made them? Must there be countless repetitions of the same horror?

There are hundreds of places where living animals are dissected—dissected by experts in the presence of classes, and then mangled by students, to the end that they may become experts; and yet nothing new is found, nothing of importance is demonstrated. They all pursue the same infamous round, repeating the same cruelties again and

again, in the same ways, and with the same results. Nothing is added to the knowledge of the human race that is of the slightest importance.

It seems absolutely certain that no natural young man ever saw, for the first time, animals being vivisected without having his pity excited, without being shocked—horrified. In order to enjoy these cruelties the natural feelings must be overcome, pity must be banished, and the heart must be hardened.

In a little while the vivisector takes no account of the pain he inflicts. He leaves the animal half dead and goes his way, knowing that the poor victim must suffer agonies beyond conception; and yet he does not care.

Is such a man fit to practise medicine? Is such a man fit to be called to the bedside of the sick? A man without sympathy, incapable of pity, caring nothing for the infliction of pain—can he be depended upon to lessen suffering, to sympathise with the afflicted? Or would he regard all his patients as he does the animals which he vivisects—simply from a heartless, scientific point of view?

These vivisectors claim that they have done a great deal for the science of surgery; and yet the best surgeons deny that they have in any way added to that science. But if they have, could they not have as well done it without pain as with it?

If the lower animals must be cut in pieces for our benefit, let us be merciful enough to render them insensible. And this can easily be done. No vivisectionist has ingenuity enough to frame a good excuse for not using anaesthetics. Neither can any vivisectionist give a good reason for trying the same experiment thousands of times. No good can be accomplished by hardening the hearts of thousands of students, by making them utterly careless of the pain which they inflict. It is shocking enough to read the reports of these experiments without trying them. It is horrible enough to know what has been done without doing it again.

I believe that it is the duty of every civilised man to do what he can to prevent the infamous practice of vivisection.

Every good man should insist that, if it is necessary, in the interest of science, to make experiments on animals, they should be rendered insensible to pain. And this, not only for the sake of the animals, but also for the sake of the men who make the experiments. Let us, if possible, save their moral natures, and keep them from becoming utterly heartless and infamous.

No good man can have the slightest respect for one who cares nothing for the agonies of the lower animals. No good man wishes for any information obtained by cruelty or by heartlessness. No good man wishes to live on the agonies of sentient beings. And no good man can, by any possibility, defend the vivisection of animals which have not been rendered insensible to pain.

A physician who practises or upholds vivisection without anaesthetics is unfit to have the care of the sick, and should not be trusted with the life or the welfare of any human being.

Let us do what we can to do away with this infamous practice—a practice that degrades and demoralises and hardens, without adding in the slightest to the sum of useful knowledge.

Without using profane words, words of the most blasphemous kind, it is impossible to express my loathing, horror, and hatred of vivisection.

A Judgment of God.

When Colonel Ingersoll was interviewed at Omaha in regard to the prayers of the Christian Endeavorers for him, he said: "It reminds me of an experience I had with a Pennsylvania clergyman. At one time I had a severe throat trouble, and the statement got into the newspapers that I had cancer of the throat. The clergyman took it upon himself to write me a letter, in which he said he had heard of my affliction and believed it was a judgment from God on account of my blasphemous utterances. I answered the letter, and told him he might be right. If it should develop that I had a cancer, as he said, it might be it had been sent by God as a punishment for my utterances. In that case I did not know as I should blame God very much, for if I was in his place I might be tempted to kill a man whom I could not answer. That settled the clergyman, and he subsequently wrote me a letter of apology."

AN HISTORICAL TRIAL OF PRAYER.

IN 1588 the Spanish Government set out to invade England with an armed force, determined to strike an effectual blow for the suppression of Protestantism, and to annex that kingdom to the Spanish crown. Pope Sixtus V. had assigned that heretical province to his faithful Spanish liege. Portugal and all the maritime Catholic powers had joined their forces; warships were rapidly built; while soldiers from all over Europe rushed to the aid of the willing tool of the Church to crush a hated rival. The fleet, known as the Great Armada, consisted of 130 ships, the largest constructed in Europe to that date. More than 50,000 of the best disciplined troops in the world, known as the Invincibles, were shipped on board these vessels, to constitute the land force which was to destroy the English armies. It is said that every noble family in Spain sent one of its numbers to swell the mighty host of warriors. Queen Elizabeth had only thirty ships of the line to resist such a formidable attack. It was regarded by the authorities on each side that this contest was to decide the controversy between the conflicting religions for all time. The Pope called to his aid the heavenly powers. During the three years that preparations were going on prayers from every church, cathedral, and oratory importuned divine aid. Froude, in his admirable account of this expedition, says: "All pains were taken to make the expedition spiritually worthy of its purpose. No impure thing, especially no impure woman, was to approach the yards or ships. Swearing, quarrelling, gambling, were prohibited under terrible penalties. The galleons (large ships) were named after the apostles and saints, to whose charge they were committed; and every seaman and soldier confessed and communed on going on board. The ship's boys at sunrise were to sing their 'Buenos Dias' at the foot of the mainmast, and their 'Ave Maria' as the sun sank into the ocean. On the imperial banner were embroidered the figures of Christ and his mother; and as a motto the haughty '*Plus ultra*' of Charles V. was replaced with the more pious aspiration, '*Exsurgo, Deus, et vindica causam tuam*' (Arise, God, and avenge thy cause)."

The next day after leaving Lisbon, while every good Catholic was on his bended knees, a violent tempest struck the Armada, carrying down large numbers of the ships and all on board, while the others returned to port.

Refitting their ships, and adding others, with fresh recruits, they again set sail, the heavenly powers again and more earnestly importuned to favor the holy Church. A collision between the forces occurred in the British Channel. The invaders were repulsed, and sailed northward to avoid the English. They were met by another terrible storm, with adverse winds, which shattered much of their shipping. Only fifty-three vessels out of that immense Armada ever returned to Spain. The rest were captured by the English, or wrecked and sunk.

—*Progressive Thinker.*

INSANITY AND INSPIRATION.

"So complete is this identity between incomprehensible conduct and madness that amongst early nations the madman is supposed to be under the immediate inspiration and control of the deity, whose agency is always believed to commence where coherent and rational behavior terminates."—*Jeremy Bentham.*

In this passage, which occurs in the *Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind*, issued under the name of Philip Beauchamp, by George Grote, from the manuscripts of Bentham, we have a clear elucidation of some of the most curious problems of religion. Sensible and orderly conduct is never ascribed to the supernatural. But let a person fast till he sees visions, and his ravings then have a chance of being taken as the utterances of some god. All the old prophets worked themselves up into some such condition of ecstasy. Isaiah walked naked for three years. This condition was so divine that, when Saul stripped himself naked, they said: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" In the circumstances related of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Hosea, John the Baptist, Jesus, Mahomet, Joan of Arc, Swedenborg, and others, physicians have found evidences of aberration and

mental exaltation. They carried, at any rate, sail that would have been danger to any without ballast enough to bear it.

A madman strikes terror because his acts cannot be predicted. He may break out in any place. Now, if there be an infinite deity, the position of finite beings before him must be even worse than that before a madman. No one knows what he may do next. But the madman's power is limited while God is omnipotent. He may at any moment roll the heavens together as a scroll, and melt up the worlds with fervent heat. It is trusted he will not do so, at least just yet, because it is supposed he has regard for his creatures. But this is altogether to make him such another as ourselves. If he be infinite and inscrutable, no present course of well-being to us is a sufficient justification to conclude that it may not be in the divine plan to change and hurl us all to destruction. How can the pot predicate when the potter will smash it, or say why one is made to honor and another to dishonor? The more one looks at it the more one sees that Calvin's god is the only logical deity—or rather devil—after all. Every reason ever assigned to suppose that God may not act to us as a devil is a reason for concluding that there is no God at all.

BABBALANJA.

SILLY HYMNS.

THE New York *Sun* has an article on "Hymns that Lack Sense." Among them it notes the following :—

Hasten to some distant isle
In the bosom of the deep,
Where the skies forever smile,
And the blacks forever weep.

Another missionary hymn says :—

Go sound the trumpet on Judah's shore,
And say to Israel, weep no more ;
Israel, weep no more.
The blood that's shed for me and you
Can likewise cleanse a guilty Jew.

One of Charles Wesley's hymns begins :—

And are we yet alive
And see each other's face ?
Glory and praise to Jesus give
For his redeeming grace.

Here is an example of the exclamatory hymn :—

Oh, for the pearly gates of heaven !
Oh, for the golden shore !
Oh, for the Sun of righteousness
That setteth nevermore !
Oh, for a heart that never sins !
Oh, for a soul washed white !
Oh, for a voice to praise our King,
Nor weary day and night !

As a specimen of derangement of similes take the following :—

His sheep shall return to the fold,
Shall build upon Him as a rock ;
Nor fear when the tempest shall blow,
And nothing the building shall shock.

And here is a nice one for the pietist who loves to wallow in the precious blood :—

Agonising in the garden
Lo ! your Maker prostrate lies !
On the bloody tree behold Him—
Hear Him cry before he dies.

The *Sun* thinks the hymns need improvement. We think they are about worthy of the religion they represent.

The Bible.

The Bible is a library of old fictions, ghost and demon stories, doctored narratives, bloody codes of law, obscenities and fables, with here and there wise sayings and valuable pictures of ancient life. It contains various religions, and is the hardest to understand of all the books in the world. Thousands of books and commentaries have been published to explain it, and yet Christians generally know scarcely anything about it. They claim that every word of it is inspiration, even those spoken by Balaam's ass. They go to church so as to appear good, or to see their friends, or to show their clothes. Some of them would not have a friend in the world if they did not belong to some church.—*Dean Dudley.*

ACID DROPS.

EMPEROR WILLIAM of Germany is a "god-intoxicated man," in quite another sense than was Spinoza. He imagines himself to rule by the grace of God, and every maggot in his head is a tip from the Almighty. Such a personage is above the ordinary rules of courtesy, and even of common sense ; otherwise he would never have sent that telegram to President Kruger in the Transvaal. Emperor William as the knight-errant of freedom is a colossal joke. How many of his own subjects has he flung into prison for exercising their right of free speech on religion and politics ! He has imprisoned Freethinkers for "blasphemy," and Socialists for "insulting the throne." Under his government, the German people are denied the very first right of free citizenship. And this is the gentleman who is in such a hurry to congratulate the Boers on maintaining their own rights in South Africa. Physician, heal thyself ! is an excellent maxim ; and Emperor William will be well-advised to begin at home in his zeal for the rights of man.

Mr. Plowden, a London magistrate, has severely condemned some of the practices of the National Society for the Protection of Children from Cruelty. It appears that the officers of this Society are instructed to ask a number of questions, which Mr. Plowden said were silly and impertinent. "What," he asked, "had the question of the child's religion or its illegitimacy to do with its being treated cruelly ? Such questions were indefensible on any ground whatever."

We are glad that this point has come out so clearly. And for this reason. Mr. Waugh, the head of this Society, who is a man of God, once backed up the Bishop of Chester in his infamous falsehood that the worst ill-users of children were working-class Secularists. We challenged him to produce his evidence, but he fell back upon the liar's refuge of "dignified silence." But as Mr. Waugh's officers ask questions about the religion of cruel parents, it ought to be easy for him to produce his evidence—if he has any. His continued silence, after Mr. Plowden's observations, can only be regarded as implying that he and Bishop Jayne lied together.

The "unsectarians" have won a great victory in the Cardiff School Board elections. That is to say, the Nonconformists have beaten the Churchmen. This is very interesting to Nonconformists. But when these gentlemen call themselves "unsectarian" they are impostors. They are really promoting Nonconformist religion in the Board schools under the disguise of religious liberty.

House-to-house visitation, to ascertain who goes to church, chapel, and Sunday-school, is carried on at Grays, as at some other places. It is to be feared that in small towns this method of proselytism may also be made the medium of persecution. The officious busybodies who carry on this visitation might often be benefited by a cold reception.

Christ-up-to-date Schlatter, the ex-shoemaker, ex-perpetual motion crank, and ex-bedlamite, has already attracted the attention of a greater number of people than ever heard of the Galilean in his day, and the amount of testimony published about him is much more voluminous than the Gospels. Still, the world waits to hear of one verifiable cure that he has effected. His case is valuable as exhibiting phenomena similar to those said to have attended the career of his predecessor nearly two thousand years ago, and as affording us a chance to judge how much truth there is likely to be in the older accounts. Taking advantage of the opportunity for comparison, we find that messiahs are very common clay, and that the problem which they raise is not whether they are inspired or uninspired, but whether they are lunatics or impostors.—*Truthseeker.*

There have been more arrests of Seventh-Day Adventists in Ontario for working on Sunday. Among those arrested was the pastor of the Adventist Church. He was working on the new church building. The opposition set fire to and burned three thousand feet of lumber put on the premises for the proposed church. Later, the good Christian enemies of the Adventists evidently came to the conclusion that it would be safer to attack their victims under the forms of law. Hence these prosecutions. The spirit that prompted the burning of the lumber was the same that led to the enactment of the Sabbath law.

The *Umtata Herald* says that an evangelist, who was asked as to the progress of the gospel among the heathen Kaffirs, reported that the result was discouraging. When he told them that God was greater than the Government, they replied : "Do not come here to tell us lies and try to impose upon us, we have eyes and can see for ourselves ; your God may be strong for aught we know, but we have never seen Him do anything, and He cannot be as strong as

the Government which sends out troops of soldiers with strange and horrible guns, and builds gaols and court-houses, and spreads telegraph wires all over the country. We know what the Government is, but as for your God, we do not know anything about Him. When the Government or the chief tells us to go to church, it is time enough then to think about it; but don't you come here telling us lies. You may be a wizard for anything we know; be off!" The "heathen in his blindness" seems to have scored on this occasion.

The Russian Government has imposed on American missionaries in Western China, who prefer to cross into Russian territory, the condition that they shall not attempt to proselytise there. That is to say, the Christian government is sterner in this respect than the heathen one. Yet every Christian is ready to howl against Chinese intolerance, while that of Christian Russia is taken as a matter of course.

In American journals we see advertised "Salvation Oil." It is not pretended to cleanse from all sin, but to be an efficient embrocation. Salvation Oil is 25 cents a bottle, and comes really as cheap as the Salvation pills said to be offered without money and without price.

The Churches are bound to make themselves attractive or become deserted, so the secular spirit is invading even the old-fashioned puritanical kirks. The Rev. Farley Porter, a Presbyterian clergyman of Elba, N.Y., has astounded some of his parishioners by declaring that a house should be attached to the church where "games of billiards, cards, and dancing might be indulged in." He has gone still further in the same direction by suggesting that at the meetings of the ladies' aid society the game of eubre might be played occasionally without serious harm.

These are trying times for pulpiteers who are anxious to keep in the sensational swim. Congregations tire of political tirades; it is hard to make a stir with a new secular subject every Sunday. A few weeks ago a Michigan minister preached a base-ball sermon, having his church plastered over with paraphernalia of the game to adorn the occasion. Last week an Oakland, Cal., minister preached a sermon on "Wheels." He said the qualities required for a good Christian and a good cyclist were the same. Both must be able to balance themselves perfectly, and both must be alert. Both must keep their lamps trimmed and burning, and neither can go on slippery places. He said he believed riding the wheel was pious, and the bicycle enabled a man to become a winged angel.

The New York *Sun* says that New York is a difficult field for lecturers, because no papers can be worked in their interest. Robert G. Ingersoll is still a drawing card, and Mark Twain will be able to get a paying house when he returns from the antipodes. Talmage can fill a New York Hall at a free lecture, but he can get no large audiences at a pay lecture.

The greatest invention of the age is announced from America. It is the work of a clergyman, whose class are not usually noted for discoveries of any kind. The design of the invention is unique. It is to enable those who partake of the Lord's blood to do so without risk of catching disease. The patentee is the Rev. P. G. Klingler, of Catsanqua. His idea, like all really great ones, is very simple. His communion cup has a double rim, the inner one moving round and cleansing that portion of the outer rim touched by the lips. He explained the device to his qualmish congregation, who have adopted it. What a pity that Jesus, who, with his disciples, did not even follow the customary practice of washing hands at meals, did not get a hint from the Rev. P. G. Klingler. As it is, he may dislike a novelty unactioned by his precedent. When some matter in connection with the sacrifice did not suit Jehovah, he was accustomed to send down fire upon the altar most expeditiously; and we would not be surprised if the Rev. P. G. Klingler should come in some fine Sunday morning and find nothing left of his new-fangled cup but a little solder and some melted metal in a puddle.

The *Irish World*, of New York, in an article on "The Irish Party and the Educational Question," shows how far religion overrides patriotism. It says, and with truth, that on the education question they are nearer the Tories than the Liberals. It reminds its readers that Lord Salisbury "believes in religious teaching in the schools. So also does his colleague in the Government, the Catholic Duke of Norfolk. Both are Tories, both are members of the present Government, and both are for giving State aid to schools in which religion forms part of the educational program." The *I. W.* believes in making alliance with the Tories for the benefit of religion, because "the Liberals are pledged to Home Rule," whatever happens. Mr. Patrick Ford is regarded by many Irishmen as a statesman as well as a

patriot; but this attitude strikes us as a good deal like the endorsement of protection as a spite to England, who goes in for free trade.

Archbishop Corrigan writes in the *Seminary* on the story of "Our Lady of Guadalupe." It is said that the Virgin appeared three times to Juan Diego, an Indian neophyte, in 1531, and bade him make known to the Bishop of Mexico that she desired a church to be built on the spot, and that she would be a kind and loving mother to the poor Indians and to all who should invoke her aid. Afterwards Juan Diego found upon his cloak a beautiful picture of the Madonna.

The story must be true, for it is approved by the Holy See, and quite recently, "after a long and most searching examination, Pope Leo XIII. granted a new office and mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, by letters dated March 6, 1894. In 1754 Pope Benedict XIV. had already granted a similar favor, although the text relating to the apparition was not so explicit. In fact, hardly a Pontiff has sat on the throne of Peter during the past 250 years who has not accorded special favors to the sanctuary at Guadalupe." Protestants need not laugh. What better evidence have they for the miracles of the Bible?

Tennyson's successor in the Poet Laureateship is appointed. It is another Alfred—Mr. Alfred Austin. He is a respectable man of letters, and will be able to turn out the requisite supply of loyal and godly odes for a hundred a year. Swinburne and William Morris are much greater poets, but they are both heretics and Republicans, and they don't want the post. William Morris says "the Poet Laureate is merely a private servant of the Queen. Why shouldn't she choose just whom she likes? Why bother about it?"

The men of God seem ready to preach on anything, so long as they can only keep their pulpits and salaries. According to the *Phrenological Magazine*, March 8 is the anniversary of Gall's first lectures in Vienna, and "many metropolitan and provincial ministers have already consented to co-operate" in celebrating the centenary by "preaching phrenological sermons on that date." It is to be hoped that, after the sermons, these ministers will exhibit their bumps to their congregations.

There is one fact that ought to be noticed by these phrenological preachers. The great Darwin, who became such a complete sceptic, says that the members of a Phrenological Society to whom he sent his portrait declared that his bump of reverence was big enough for a dozen clergymen.

A scandal has shaken the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon as these Shakers have never shook before. Elder Daniel Evans, the head of the community, who has been thirty years a member, and is fifty-five years of age, has eloped with pretty Sister Mabel Franklin, who is thirty years his junior, and has been a book-keeper to the community and a full-fledged Shaker sister only a few months, but sufficiently long for the Elder's fondness to become manifest to all observers.

The four principles upon which the Shaker community is founded are: Virginal Purity, Christian Communism, Confession, and Separation from the World. Elder Daniel Evans, whose name in the world was Daniel Offord, but who assumed the name of Evans when he took the place of Elder Frederick William Evans a few years ago, has, it is feared, broken all four of the principles.

The Shakers are a wealthy, but not a growing, community, and consist of between two and three thousand members. As they are strict celibates, they have to recruit their members from the children or young persons outside, and many of these, like Mabel Franklin, leave the body after but a short acquaintance. D. M. Bennett, the founder of the *Truthseeker*, was one who sojourned there for a while. Their first settlement was at Watervliet, in 1776; the community at Mount Lebanon began in 1787, soon after the death of "Mother Ann Lee," who is believed to have been an incarnation of Christ; and here it owns considerable property.

In 1878 Mr. Hinds, of the Oneida community, estimated the wealth of the Shakers (then numbering about 2,400) at nearly twelve million dollars. Elder Daniel had control of considerable funds. He has several times visited other Shaker communities in various parts of the country, and it is hoped that he may yet return, confess his sin, and be received back into grace, having detached himself from that emissary of Satan—a smart, seductive young woman, who the Shakers say must have hypnotised him.

The Shakers say that they are the true disciples of Jesus, who lived a celibate life. They are Spiritists, and had "mejums" and communications with the spirit-world long before the

Fox sisters started cracking their toe-joints at Hydesville. They say that the Shaker communities are founded on revelations first vouchsafed to Mother Ann Lee, and that they are the exact models of communities which exist in the spirit-world, where, of course, no elders are ever tempted by fleshly desires.

The good old Bible institution of polygamy has received another blow by the admission of Utah as one of the United States on the expressed stipulation that the ordinary marriage laws shall prevail.

A woman preached at the Methodist Church last Sunday evening. Gospel religion is ludicrously inconsistent. A female missionary goes rampaging abroad with an inspired New Testament in her handbag, and the blessed words of Paul buckling from her tongue; but when some of Paul's inspirations don't suit her own book, she puts her tongue in her cheek and swallows the unsavory morsels. Hear apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35): "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak..... 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." Also (1 Timothy ii. 12): "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Practically, the female missionary asserts that inspired Paul was a narrow-minded bigot who didn't know any better, and probably she is quite right. So she preaches the divine Gospel of Christ, who, when on earth, loved all the uneducated believers in him, and simply damned the more cultured listeners who didn't believe. The Christianity which awards hell-fire to every man who calls another man a fool, merely because the Pharisees applied that contemptuous term to the Nazarene; and which has been cursing generations of Jew "vipers" for the last 1800 years. The Christianity of the Book; of the Apostles who record their Master's promise to come down from heaven on clouds and rule the earth during their lifetime. And unless the pore heathen believe certain things set forth in the Book, whilst shutting their eyes and ears and minds to other things—viz., the test passages by which the Book's pretensions are revealed—they must follow their fathers to Sheol. Paul or no Paul, missionary teaching of that sort is deplorable in women, as in men.—*Sunday Times* (Calcutta).

The parishioners of Hoo, St. Werbury, near Rochester, have petitioned the Bishop of Rochester to transfer their vicar, the Rev. Percy G. Benson, to some other parish. They accuse him of disloyalty to the Church, and of preaching at certain of them from the pulpit. A number of influential parishioners have announced that they shall no longer pay the voluntary Church rate while Mr. Benson holds the living.

During a religious service in the Beckenham Congregational Chapel, at the close of last year, Mr. James Medwin, one of the deacons, suddenly fell forward and expired. There is no moral.

Church bells are not bad music when you hear them in the country at a distance of two or three miles—some people prefer ten miles to three. But in a town they are an infernal nuisance. Clang! clang! clang! And sometimes, when the bell is cracked, it is Clank! clank! clank! People may be ill, or tired out and trying to sleep, yet they cannot "silence that dreadful bell." It is ringing for religion, and is therefore a privileged nuisance.

We are glad to see the London *Star* denouncing the fine inflicted on costermongers for crying their wares on Sunday, while the Church is "allowed to cry its wares to the annoyance of thousands."

The appointment by the Bishop of Hereford of the Rev. Mr. Alexander, a young man of about thirty, who is Reader of the Temple, to the valuable Canonry of Hereford, over the heads of those who have been longer in the ministry than he has been in the world, is characterised as a scandal by a vicar who writes to the *Times*.

The criticism which we pass on Professor Goldwin Smith's article has suggested itself to others. Thus the *Nation* remarks: "One can but admire the serenity and security with which Mr. Smith turns from the Old Testament to the New. We fear his own tests of credibility would, if rigidly applied to the latter, land him in as serious difficulties as those he enumerates respecting the former; and he makes no allusion to the fact that the great critical battle-field is now precisely in the New Testament; that the methods and theories which have wrought such sweeping changes in our way of looking at the Old Testament are now being applied, with illuminating results, to the New."

The *Jewish Messenger* says: "Goldwin Smith drives a nail into Christianity when he decries the authenticity and utility of the Old Testament. Lop away the foundation, and what becomes of the structure?" Christians are slowly

becoming ashamed of the barbarities of the Old Testament, but the sense that they lie at the basis of the New also, makes them chary of openly casting it overboard.

Humor is scarce in the Bible, but there seems a touch of jocularly in the statement that Moses, who killed the Egyptian, and gave orders for the slaughter of the Midianites, was "the meekest of all men." Our Christian journals follow Moses in their meekness. They are all for peace and loving kindness; still, the Christian nations really ought to go to war to avenge the Armenian blood upon the unspeakable Turk. Here is the *New York Independent*, a journal of similar influence to our *Christian World*, saying: "How long Salisbury? How long Emperor William? How long Lord God Almighty?" Such a climax suggests that Salisbury and William may well defer operations until the last-named power begins to stir.

The Rev. John Parmiter, M.A., rector of St. Mildred's, Canterbury, was found dead on the railway on Sunday morning, under circumstances which pointed unmistakably to suicide. The deceased had been in a depressed state of mind for some time past.

The *New York World* reports the discovery by M. d'Enjoy, in Cochin China, of a race of savages called Moïs, some of whom possess a real tail. M. d'Enjoy says the vertebrate column is prolonged beyond the body by three or four vertebrae. This tail is said to be an object of pride as a sign of purity of descent.

Major-General Blaksley, in his new book, entitled *Foot-steps of the Lion*, says there is a small town not far north of Mountserratt, where every respectable dog wears a black crape bow on his tail during Lent, and where all the animals, including the pig, are compelled to fast on Good Friday. It would be interesting to have these animals' opinion of religion. It would be unprejudiced, and probably original.

The late Bishop Harvey Goodwin, whose Life has been written by Canon Rawnsley, once preached a sermon in Westminster Abbey on the personality of Satan. Some one wrote to him on the subject, and he replied as follows: "Is Satan a person? Yes, I think he is. Certainly there is much in Scripture to make us believe this, and there are many facts recorded which it is hard to understand without attributing personality. But what do we mean by personality? Is it a personality which implies omnipresence? This can hardly be. Is he an inhabitant of this world only? and under what conditions does he walk the earth? Ten thousand questions may be asked which it is impossible to answer. The whole subject is a mystery, like the existence of evil itself."

There you have Sky-Pilotry naked and unashamed. Bishop Goodwin knew just as much about the Devil as any member of his congregation. At the finish he falls back on "mystery," which is the refuge of every clerical charlatan. The "mystery" simply means that the man of God cannot explain what he preaches.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THE annual tea party and entertainment took place on Saturday evening, January 4. The school was very crowded, nearly four hundred people sitting to the tea. The success of this annual party is well known; it brings many old acquaintances together, and is much looked forward to.

The drama, *The Honeymoon*, was exceedingly well rendered, the principal characters being taken by Messrs. Henry Taylor, Thomas Anderton, John Barlow, and Henry Clough, and Misses Booth, Morton, and Harrison. All the different scenes were much appreciated by the audience, especially the scene in which the old-fashioned May-pole dance was executed. Incidental music was rendered by the Failsworth String Band. The entertainment is to be repeated on some Saturday in January.

On Sunday evening next the entertainment which was rendered by the children on Christmas Day is to be repeated. The annual private party is also to take place on Saturday, January 11.

What is man born for but to be a reformer—a remaker of what man has made, a renouncer of falsehood, a restorer of truth and good; imitating the great nature which embosoms us all, and which sleeps no moment on an old past, but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day, and with every pulsation a new life?—*Emerson*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 12, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, London, W.:—7.30, "The New Woman and the Bible" (with reference also to the later novels of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy).

January 19 and 26, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly.

February 2, Liverpool; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 12 and 13, Bolton; 14, Blackburn; 19, Glasgow; 26, Edinburgh; 29, N.S.S. Dinner. February 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 3 and 4, Ipswich; 16, Athenæum Hall, London; 23, Manchester. March 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—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.

R. KILLICK "prizes" Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past*, and is much pleased with our notice of it. This correspondent, who is a sturdy Freethinker of the fine old school, wishes us all success in the new year.

T. PERKINS (18 Brecon-street, Canton, Cardiff) wishes to know of any Freethinker in the district.

J. G. DOBSON.—Your lecture notice for January 5 was dated December 29, but it did not reach us till January 3, a day after the *Freethinker* was published.

A. E. DAVIS.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. CABELL.—We did not overlook the story of Jesus and the doctors in the temple. It is only told by Luke, and is obviously legendary. Amongst all the alleged questions and answers on that occasion, it is not said that a single one related to his supernatural birth. That would have "astonished" the doctors a great deal more than his "understanding."

R. FORDER desires us to state that the use of his name as publisher, in the announcement of a certain new journal, is entirely unauthorised. His name was used, not only without his sanction, but without his knowledge.

L. W. WILLIS.—The new Branch at Leeds is in process of formation. For information apply to J. Bradley, 6 Preston-terrace, Roundhay-road.

A CORRESPONDENT who had trouble in finding the place of Mr. Foote's lecture at Edmonton thinks we should state that the Assembly Room is at the rear of "The Eagle," and close to Silver-street Station on the Great Eastern Railway. Trains run every half hour, and cars from Finsbury Park pass the door.

T. DUNBAR.—Miss Vance has sent you ticket for the St. James's Hall lectures. Thanks for your offer to exhibit a bill. The best entrance to the Banqueting Room is in Regent-street. Should you bring a friend, and require another ticket, you can obtain one by applying to Miss Vance outside the hall.

J. HUDSON.—Cuttings always welcome.

W. TURNER.—We intend to deal with Tolstoi's new brand of Christianity as soon as we can find time for a careful criticism.

W. DYSON.—Mr. Foote is offering you a date.

H. LEES SUMNER.—It is our intention to give more portraits in the *Freethinker*.

H. BRIGGS (Derby).—We may take some opportunity of noticing *The Sign of the Cross*.

W. GRIMSHAW.—Glad you found our answer so satisfactory. Zola is a pronounced Freethinker. We did not know that Mr. Foote's imprisonment for "blasphemy" was mentioned in Cassell's *History of England*. Thanks for the reference.

L. JACKSON.—Coleridge was a joke as a systematic thinker, but all his prose writings, including the *Biographia Literaria*, abound in fine poetical flashes and felicities of expression. His literary criticisms are generally sound, and often illuminative. Now and then he is surprisingly acute on politics and social matters. His powers were extraordinary, but through constitutional indolence, arising from a lack of physical vitality, his rich genius largely ran to seed.

ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Miss Vance acknowledges: C. A. Watts, 10s. Mr. R. Forder acknowledges: C. J. Pottage, 5s.; R. Gibbons, 1s. 10d.; R. H. Side, 5s.; H. L. Sumner, 5s.; A. Abbott, 2s. 6d.; J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.; C. Shepherd, 2s. 6d.; J. Mosenthal, 5s.; J. Edmonds, 2s.; Amigo, 5s.; West London Branch, 10s.; W. Gregory, 6d.

E. HOWARD.—Inserted, as it was a special occasion.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We wish the Midland Federation all success. If we might venture a word of advice, we should say, Don't expect too much, and don't cherish the idea of an elaborate organisation.

SHAREHOLDER.—We saw the newspaper paragraph. We have also seen the Official Receiver's printed Summary of the Debtor's statement and affairs. It is ridiculous to attribute R. O. Smith's bankruptcy to the failure of the National Secular Hall Society (Ltd.). He sold a concern for £3,000; of this he received £1,400, besides interest; finally he took back the thing he sold. He had therefore the party's money and his hall too. How this could make him bankrupt is, we imagine, hardly clear to any intellect less subtle than his own.

JOHN ROBERTS, 99 Saxony-road, Liverpool, is the new secretary of the Liverpool Branch, in succession to the late C. Doeg. Members and correspondents will please note.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Grays and Tilbury Gazette—Echo—Kentish Observer—Homœopathic World—Northern Weekly Leader—Freidenker—Truthseeker—Liberator—Two Worlds—New Age—Leek Times—Progressive Thinker—Figaro—Liberty—Isle of Man Times—De Dageraad—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Irish World—New York Public Opinion.

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

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.

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

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S lecture on "What has Become of the Devil?" drew a crowded audience to the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, and the laughter and applause were quite phenomenal. Mr. Victor Roger made a first-rate chairman, saying just what was needed, with tact and fluency. Another collection was taken up for the local Children's Party.

Mr. Foote's attack on the West-end of London ought to be well supported by the metropolitan Freethinkers, who should also advertise the lectures amongst their Christian friends, and try to induce some of them to attend the meetings. It is not always that we can invite Christians to such a hall in such a neighborhood. St. James's Hall is easily accessible from all parts of London, which is a very distinct advantage. The entrance to the Banqueting Room is in Regent-street, not in Piccadilly. Those who come unprovided with tickets will find Miss Vance, or her deputy, outside, and thus obtain what they require.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes will be exhorting, in another part of the same building, while Mr. Foote is lecturing. It is to be hoped there will be no earthquake or other "act of God."

Mr. Charles Watts had a very pleasant day at Birmingham last Sunday. He received a most hearty reception from friends who had come from Derby, Leicester, Bilston, Smethwick, and other surrounding districts. His evening lecture "caught on," and at the conclusion he received quite an ovation, which he had to acknowledge three times. That staunch friend of the movement, Mr. Daniel Baker, presided, and made an excellent speech, in which he expressed his pleasure at the energy which Mr. Watts still retained. All present manifested, by an unanimous vote, their gratification at the success of Mr. Watts's visit.

On Monday evening Mr. Watts lectured at the Bristol-road Board School. There was a splendid audience, including a large number of strangers. This lecture was a "free" one, under Mr. Foote's scheme, with which the Midland friends are delighted.

To-day, Sunday, January 12, and to-morrow (Monday) Mr. Watts lectures at Bolton; and on Tuesday he speaks at Blackburn. The two last lectures are given under Mr. Foote's scheme.

A meeting was held, according to announcement, at the Alexandra Hall, Hope-street, Birmingham, last Sunday afternoon. Twenty-five persons were present representing Midland Freethought Societies. Mr. Charles Watts, who was lecturing at Birmingham that day, was unanimously elected to the chair. A list of rules was adopted, and the following officers were elected:—Mr. Holland (Bilston) president; Mr. Taylor (Birmingham) treasurer; Mr. Partridge (Birmingham) secretary. Finally, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Watts for presiding. The proceedings throughout were conducted in the best spirit, and good practical work is expected from the new organisation.

The occasion of unveiling an oil painting of Mr. Bradlaugh, executed by Mr. Wright, brought to the Bradlaugh Institute, on January 1, a large attendance of "the old guard," as well as of younger admirers of Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. George Anderson presided, and in the course of the evening gave some interesting reminiscences illustrating Mr. Bradlaugh's physical and mental powers and his scrupulous integrity. Excellent speeches were made by Messrs. Standring, Forder, Cohen, Moss, and Snell.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, in unveiling the portrait of her father, took occasion to mention the precautions she had taken to obtain from the nurses and doctor who attended him in his last illness certificates that he had not spoken on the subject of religion. She had since congratulated herself on having taken these precautions. In a letter received from Brisbane it was stated that the Countess Wachtmeister had given Mrs. Besant as her authority for the statement that Mr. Bradlaugh towards the end believed in a soul. Mrs. Bonner wrote to Mrs. Besant asking if she could give an explanation as to how such a mistake arose; but, probably owing to her absence from England, no reply had been received. One thing made Mrs. Bonner a little uneasy, and that was the fact that Mrs. Besant had told Mr. J. H. Levy in public that, if he willed, at that very moment he could speak with Mr. Bradlaugh.

Some of the succeeding speakers were apparently of opinion that Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner was over anxious on the subject, and that, as lies and calumny were Mr. Bradlaugh's portion in life, so they might be expected to continue. Mrs. Besant has herself left on record that Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions were unchanged in death. Nonetheless, we are glad to note that Mrs. Bonner inherits her father's regard for scrupulous truth, and the courage to face and expose falsehoods whenever they come to light.

We had the pleasure of a long chat with Mr. George Anderson a few days ago. Our readers will be glad to hear that he is in excellent health, and that he hopes to be present at the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner on January 29. Mr. Anderson has given us another £5 for the N.S.S. Benevolent Fund, £10 for Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, and £5 for a certain distribution of Freethought literature at meetings.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29 (Thomas Paine's birthday). The tickets are four shillings each, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from any London Branch secretary.

On Wednesday evening, January 1, Mr. Foote opened the course of free propagandist lectures under his new scheme at the Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. Owing to the very brief advertisement, and to the holidays, the meeting was not so large as it might have been, though it was quite large enough in the circumstances to be distinctly encouraging. No doubt the hall will fill up during the month. On Thursday evening, January 2, Mr. Foote opened another course of free lectures in the Assembly Rooms, Edmonton. There was a good attendance, and the lecture was warmly applauded. Mr. Foote will also deliver the fourth lecture of this course on January 23. The course at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, was opened by Mr. Watts on Wednesday, January 1. The majority of those present were strangers, who are just the people these courses of lectures are intended to reach.

On this (Sunday) evening the meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. will assume a novel form. The members of the Discussion Class are to conduct a mock trial, before a judge and jury, of the Primates of the Greek and Roman Churches, and Johannes Protestans as representing the "Reformed" Churches, on a charge of fraud and forgery, in that they have palmed off the New Testament as the Word of God. The four Evangelists, and the Apostles, Peter and Paul, are to be put in the witness-box, and their cross-examination promises to be a lively feature in the proceedings. The approach of the trial has created quite a flutter of expectant interest, and a good meeting ought to reward this maiden performance of the Discussion Class.

The *Nation*, which is the leading American literary journal, devotes a long article to the paper of Goldwin Smith on "Christianity's Millstone." It says: "The appearance of Goldwin Smith's article is a sign of the times. It is a striking thing that such a man as he should have written such an article; more striking still that it should have been published in a magazine of general circulation; most striking of all that its author should not have been immediately and bitterly assailed. Where are the polemics, where the religious passions and prejudices, of thirty years ago? In a style which, by its point and pungency, reminds one of the similar

writings of Thomas Paine, he puts together some of the harder things to believe, and the still harder things to practise, in the Old Testament, and urges that it be cast off as 'a millstone on the neck of Christianity.' For such an article by such a man, so meekly received by the general public and the religious world, it would be hard to find a parallel."

The Ladies' Liberal League of America dates from 1892. Voltairine de Cleyre is one of the leading spirits of the League, which is of an advanced Freethought character.

The number of civil marriages in Scotland, as elsewhere, is decidedly on the increase. In Glasgow, in 1894, there were 677 united before the sheriff, while in 1895 the number increased to 749. This method may not fully satisfy the demand for fuss, but it is cheap, orderly, and sensible, and thus commends itself to the canny Scot.

Rafuddin Ahmad writes in the *Fortnightly Review* "In Defence of Islam," replying to Canon MacColl and exposing his ignorance of Moslem law and his many errors in regard to the religion he criticises. He does not hesitate to characterise one utterance of the Christian Canon as "the worst example of presumptuous mendacity I have ever seen."

Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* for November 30, just to hand, describes Australia as dreadfully hot, both crops and cattle being in a sad state for want of rain. Mr. Symes has been on a lecturing tour and hard at work generally. We are sorry to see that he is still in financial difficulties. Surely the Freethinkers in that part of the world will come to his relief. It is enough to keep a paper going from a literary point of view, without having to make up a weekly loss of money in addition.

The *Liberator* reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "Some Christian Truths," dealing with a certain Christian Evidence advocate's false statements about Charles Bradlaugh, Lloyd Garrison, and the Anti-Slavery Movement.

De Dageraad for January opens with a good article on "Bibliolatry and Bible Belief," both of which appear to be rapidly declining even among the paid inculcators of Christianity in Holland, where we are pleased to note 82,000 people were bold enough to put themselves down in the census as of "no creed." Our friends of *De Dageraad*, by such publications as *The Contradictions of the Bible and Domine, Pastor, and Rabbi*, are doing capital work.

An Exhibition of Paine relics will be held at the Bradlaugh Institute, Newington Green-road, on January 29, 30, and 31. Many of the articles lately at South Place will be exhibited, and a number of others will be added. Persons with relics, pictures, coins, books, or pamphlets relating to Paine and his time are requested to communicate with R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street.

The 159th anniversary of Paine's birthday will be celebrated in Boston by a Convention of New England Freethinkers at the Paine Memorial Hall. Mr. S. P. Putnam will be present.

Excellent letters in support of Secular Education appear in the *Barnsley Chronicle*. One of the best is by G. W. Irving. Another by "Herberon Aubert" gives some telling quotations from Herbert Spencer.

The Blackburn Branch had a social reunion, including tea, on New Year's Day. It was so successful that a similar function has been arranged for Thomas Paine's birthday (January 29).

The South Shields Branch held their usual Soirée on Christmas Eve, in the Westoe-lane Board schools. About 100 attended, and spent a right merry Christmas. The Annual Social was held on New Year's Day. There were 120 present, and the gathering was a complete success. Mr. G. White arranged everything well, and Mr. D. Bow catered to everyone's satisfaction.

The Manchester Branch held its Annual Soirée on New Year's Day. A large number of members and friends assembled and took tea, after which there was an excellent entertainment, consisting of a performance by the Dramatic Society, music, and dancing. It was in every way a most successful function.

Mr. George Standring lectures for the Manchester Branch this afternoon and evening. It is a long while since Mr. Standring lectured in Manchester, and no doubt the local Freethinkers will take this opportunity of hearing him.

LIVING BY FAITH.

WE have often referred to the inconsistency of Christians, whose professions and practices are so widely different from each other; and we have always insisted that they ought either to live strictly in accordance with the teachings of Christ, or to repudiate them as being wholly impracticable, if not absolutely impossible, in the present age of the world. It has always appeared to us that the failure of the Church to obey the commands of its Lord and Master as recorded in the New Testament is conclusive evidence of a want of faith in the inspiration and the binding authority of that book; and, being of that opinion, we have not hesitated on more than one occasion to accuse it of gross inconsistency and transparent hypocrisy. While this may be true of the great mass of Christians, we are pleased to note an exception to this general proposition which has just been brought to our attention by the *Boston Globe* of Thursday, the 5th inst. According to a telegram from Chicago, Ill., published therein, a new sect of Christians, about fifty in all, has just been organised under the name of "Children of God"; and their fundamental doctrine is that work and money are not essential to happiness, and that by putting their trust in God all of their bodily wants will be provided for without labor on their part. The founder of this new Church is a Jew, who has forsaken his own religion, and has been preaching this new faith for several weeks; and, as a consequence thereof, he has made the above-mentioned number of converts thereto, who are now endeavoring to reduce it to actual practice.

As evidence of their sincerity, it is stated that they ask no alms, and even refuse to accept the money which they have earned. Whole families have deserted their homes to live in this remarkable community, being entirely dependent upon the bounty of Almighty God. The leaders of the new faith have established a "heaven," and are luring the simple-minded by promises of an easy life without work. The "Children of God" have their Chicago "heaven" at 5487 Madison-avenue, a two-storey building. The front of the building is used as a church, and the rear as a dwelling. They have a treasurer, who is expected to receive funds from some mysterious source. No collections are taken. There are three meetings on Sunday and two on week days.

Whatever may be thought of this new denomination of Christians, we think that it must be admitted by all that they possess at least one virtue of which other sects are utterly destitute; and that is, perfect consistency between faith and practice. It is quite evident that they really believe in a literal compliance with the commands of Christ, who, in his Sermon on the Mount, is reported to have said:—

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. vi. 25, 26).

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

"Therefore take no thought, saying: 'What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?'"

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 30-33).

We are pleased to know that at last the teachings of Christ are to be subjected to a practical test; and we shall await with much interest the result of this experiment. If these people actually succeed in living without work, that fact will accomplish more towards making converts to Christianity than all the combined efforts of preachers, evangelists, and missionaries have ever done in that direction. It will afford the greatest possible inducement for the unemployed, who are now suffering for the necessities of life, to join this organisation, so that all their wants may be immediately provided for. We can conceive of nothing which will be of greater benefit to the cause of Christ than the success of this new movement; and that it

has been so auspiciously inaugurated is a fact over which all true Christians ought to rejoice, as it will afford a practical demonstration of the truth of the religion which they profess, and will for ever silence the voices of their opponents.

If, however, this experiment should prove to be a failure, as we believe that it will, what, then, can be said by our Christian friends in defence of their faith, and with what reason can they expect it to be accepted by intelligent persons? For, if the precepts of Christ are incapable of being reduced to practice, they cannot have been inspired by infinite wisdom, and, therefore, are unworthy of respect by any class of people. That they are wholly incompatible with the welfare and the happiness of mankind is too self-evident a proposition to require argument in its support; and, therefore, we are compelled to regard the Christian religion as a totally irrational system of faith, which ought to be immediately rejected by all rational minds.

—*Boston Investigator.*

Surviving Paganism.

The curious dualism of the Anglian peasant, mentioned by Dr. Jessopp, who said, "That Providence is a bad 'un; first he took my missis, then he spoilt my taters, and now he's spoilt my corn; but I reckon there's one abev as 'ull put a stopper on him if he goes too fur," was illustrated by Mr. Gomme in an address to the Folk-Lore Society. He mentioned, in connection with still existing sacred wells, that a Scottish peasant, when he came to worship at the well, cried: "O Lord, Thou knowest that well would it be for me this day, an' I had stoopit my knees and my heart afore Thee in spirit and in truth, as often as I have stoopit them afore this well. But we maun keep the customs of our fathers." In like manner, there is still a superstition in Lancashire of a long journey after death. Of a man who died of apoplexy at a public dinner, one of the company remarked: "Well, poor John, God rest his soul. He has at last gone to his long rest with a belly full of good meat, and that's some consolation."

In a sermon preached by the Rev. W. Pemble, published in 1659, the case of a man is referred to who, being questioned touching his faith, replied that God was a good old man, and Christ a towardly youth; that his soul was a great bone in his body; and after his death, if he had done well, he should be put into a pleasant green meadow. This conception of the soul, as a bone in the body, is paralleled by a notion of the New Zealanders that a peculiarly sacred character attaches to the backbone. It is not long since one of the Peculiar People cited, in a court of justice, the passage, "Not a bone of his body shall be broken," as a sufficient answer to the magistrate's inquiry if they would send for a doctor in a surgical case.

Post-Mortem Salvation.

It is like this. A man comes to me and says: "There is a fortune for you that amounts to millions deposited in the First National Bank, that you can have by paying to me ten per cent. of it." I reply: "Good! I will go at once and draw the money and pay you the commission." "No," he says, "you cannot do that; the money will not be paid to you until after your death; but it is a sure thing for you then, if you pay my commission now." "Well," I say, "it is a good thing for my estate, anyhow, if true. I will go to the bank and ascertain the fact, and cheerfully pay your price for the information." "No," he says, "that won't do; you must take my word for it. There is great danger that you may lose it all by knowing too much. You must have faith that it is true—all safe as I tell you. All learning that goes beyond faith is dangerous." And so, if I am a fool or an ignoramus, I pay the commission, exemplifying the proverb, "A fool and his money are soon parted," and hug myself with the delusion that I am smarter and richer than the infidel who, from his great learning, refuses to believe in the promises of the Gospel sharp, who is now living high on the money he has fooled me out of.—*J. P. Richardson.*

SCIENCE AND SUPERNATURALISM.—Science has taught the race that the sequence of cause and effect is inviolable; that the order of the physical universe is rational; that creation is not an historical event, but a perpetual process; that there is no failure and no disorder in nature; and that, to approximate to anything like a right understanding of things, the persons, or, if I may coin the word, the *anthrocentric* point of view, must be abandoned.—*John Burroughs.*

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TURKISH QUESTION.

"I've just returned from Constantinople," said Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith, the author and artist, to a *Boston Herald* representative in New York, two or three days ago. "While there, I had an opportunity, through talks with Minister Terrell and two of the Sultan's aides, to learn all the inside facts about the Armenian atrocities. The whole matter has been grossly misunderstood. The root of the trouble lies in the missionaries sent out to Armenia from England and America. Instead of trying to help the people, they teach them that they are ill-treated, and sow the seeds of discontent and rebellion. They have started all the difficulty; and, when the blame is properly placed, it will rest upon their heads.

"We hear a great deal in this country about 'the barbarous Turk.' Now, I have travelled and painted all over the globe, and know pretty well the inhabitants of all countries; and let me tell you that I never met a more civilised, humane, intelligent, cleanly, pious, and chaste man than the typical Turk. He is quiet and respectable; he is pre-eminently kind and good to his family.

"See how humane the Turks are to animals. I don't know how many hundred thousand dogs there are in Constantinople, but probably there are fifty to each block. Every few minutes, if you are watching what goes on around you, you will see a Turk go over to a bake shop, buy a bit of bread, or something else that the dogs will eat, and feed them. Nobody owns these creatures. They have been common property for a thousand years, I suppose; yet, ugly and mangy as they are, they never go hungry. Nor do they ever suffer violence. Striking a dog in the streets of Constantinople means imprisonment for a year. Why, I've seen a team come along one of those narrow streets when a dog was lying in the way, and the driver would stop his donkeys and lift the dog out of the way, rather than run the risk of hurting him. I never saw anyone beat or kick a donkey in Turkey. The people recognise that these creatures are their faithful servants, and treat them kindly. The love existing between the Turk or the Arabian and his horse is proverbial.

"What have we in the way of religion to teach these people? Nothing. It's pure bumptiousness for us to try to 'convert' them. They neither want nor need our religion. They've got a better one of their own.

"Another point. What order of men are they whom the English and the American religious bodies send out as missionaries? If you have ever noted closely the students in our training schools for the ministry, you must have discovered that, as a class, they are far from representing the best, or even a very good, type of American manhood. Many of them are young men from country towns and villages who could not make a decent living in any other calling. They hear a sermon by some returned missionary who wishes to arouse interest in the country in which he has lived, and straightway they are called to labor in the same field. Such sermons are apt to take hold of the less intelligent and more impressionable men; and it is often the men who are not fitted to take high rank among the ministry in their own country who feel themselves drawn to work in a foreign land. The result is that we send out the most incapable specimens of our rural population—men of uncouth manners, who have learned a little Latin and Hebrew—the representatives of half-a-dozen religious sects, which are at constant war with each other about their creeds—to convert a cultured, courteous, pious, humane, temperate race, whose unified religion enters as much into the life of its members as does their business.

"Now and then we hear of some girl in a country town who thinks that she has a mission to do good to the heathen. She had far better go down to the factory in her own village and minister there; but no, there is no glamor about that. Imagining that she is a new Joan of Arc, our hysterical friend tells some missionary body all about it; and they send her over to Turkey. You can picture to yourself the amazement and the disgust with which the Turks regard such missionaries. Superb specimens of physique, they look upon these little wizened, dried-up, spectacled women with infinite contempt; just as they scoff at the idea of adopting a religion about which the various schools cannot agree.

"Well, colonies of such boors and cranks go over to Armenia and found schools. The children come to be taught, and eventually they join some one or another Christian church. They are pariahs as long as they live—marked boys and girls, branded men and women, who have lost caste among their fellows. What have they gained? 'Christianity,' you may say. Very true. But if they would lead pure and noble lives under the religion of Mohammed, how are they better off? We surely cannot believe that heathens who lead good lives according to their lights do not go to heaven.

"Pretty soon someone comes along and hits an Armenian over the head. The missionaries keep telling their converts and the poor people that the Turk did it. They tell them

that they are abused, and stir them up to rebellion. The result is bloodshed, as you have seen. So far as can be learned, not one American missionary has been injured.

"But our missionaries and those sent out by the English can, if they will, do immense good. They can teach the races, among which they make their homes, to plough, to harrow, to make and to use tools, and innumerable other things in which they are far behind us. There is very little use to carry our knowledge of medicine to the Turks, because the latter are never sick. They are temperate in all things; they drink no wine (their religion forbids it); and they eat very little meat. Above all, they are the cleanest people on the globe. Your orthodox Turk bathes three times a day. When you enter a restaurant in Constantinople, the first thing they bring you is a bowl of hot water and some fresh tow to wipe your hands on. Then they bring you cold water and a fresh towel. Now, disease is bred by dirt and intemperance; and in the absence of these there is health.

"But, although Turkey is not one of the countries to which we can with advantage send missionaries with a knowledge of medicine, we can really benefit the Turks and the Armenians by teaching them the mechanical arts and agriculture. And in that direction lie our rightful activities in their behalf; not in the way of religion. For a people whom you can hardly induce to go to church once a week, save to hear a sensational sermon, to teach religion to a race who go gladly and enthusiastically to worship the Jehovah whom they believe to be behind the blank wall on the Meccaward end of their mosques, is the most arrogant bumptiousness."

A DIVINE JUDGE JEFFREYS; OR, WHY CHRIST DIED.

JEHOVAH rose up from his large easy chair,
In his mansion suspended high up in the air;
And his teeth he did gnash,
And he pulled his moustache,
And like an old trooper profanely did swear!

For he had some apples uncommonly fine,
Off which Eve and Adam were told not to dine;
Yet the male renegade,
And his spare rib—the jade,
Had wilfully Yahveh's commands disobeyed!

Now, he is an awfully touchy old blade,
And out of this molehill a mountain he made;
Although he well knew,
If the Bible is true,
What would happen, before earth's foundations were laid

And he'd played Eve and Adam a very mean trick,
For he caused them to be led astray by Old Nick;
Yet he both of them "cussed,"
Did Jehovah the Just,
And out of the garden they quickly were thrust!

And we, the descendants of Adam and Eve
(At least so we're told in "God's Word" to believe),
Their sin do inherit,
And richly we merit
Damnation in hell, when we die, to receive!

But he gives us just one little ghost of a chance,
From this tropical sentence, of de-liver-ance;
And he offers instead
A front seat when we're dead
In his "up-a-bove," golden-paved, heavenly manse!

For he ordained the murder of J. C., his son
(Who was really himself, for the two are but one);
And if we have belief,
Though of rogues we're the chief,
The above-mentioned murder for us will atone!

ESS JAY BEE.

VOLTAIRE'S ROMANCES.—One popular idea of Voltaire is that of a mere scoffer at sacred things, a ribald reviler of the best human sentiments. Another common notion of him is that of a cold sceptic, who subjected everything to the test of a narrow reasoning process; a man who cared nothing personally either for good or evil; who was all brain and no heart. If these romances fairly reflect the real nature of Voltaire, they exhibit the character of a warm-hearted, sensitive, indiscriminating man, who sickened over human suffering and human persecution, and who employed, with an almost reckless prodigality, against the enemies he hated most, the instinctive weapon of wit which served him best.—*Westminster Review*.

BOOK CHAT.

THE Open Court Publishing Company publishes a story called *Karma*, by Dr. Paul Carus, illustrated by Japanese artists, and printed on Japanese crepe paper. The same house will issue *Lovers Three Thousand Years Ago* (as indicated by the Song of Solomon), by Rev. T. A. Goodwin, D.D., who does not suppose that it is Christ's nose which is compared to the Tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus.

* * *

Mr. J. W. Gott, of Bradford, has published, in pamphlet form (2d.), a lecture on *The Future of Liberalism*, by Mr. J. M. Robertson, who advocates Old Age Pensions, and an Executive consisting of permanent heads of departments, acting under the supervision of parliamentary committees. These are the most important points of the lecture, but there are many minor points presented and argued with much ability. Mr. Robertson is safest when he is reasoning abstractly; in practical matters, involving personalities as well as principles, he appears to argue from wishes rather than facts. He is simply going against human nature in advocating the abolition of "the leadership." Leadership is a natural fact. Parties cannot help having leaders. The only real point at issue is this—whether it is better to let natural leaders play the part of free-lances, or to saddle them with responsibility. Mr. Gladstone may not have been an ideal leader of the Liberal party, but there was only one position possible for him when his party came into power, as was demonstrated by the logic of events on more than one occasion. Parnell was in his right place at the head of the Irish party, and the state of that party since his fall and death is an instructive commentary on the "evil of leadership."

* * *

Euripides the Rationalist: A Study in the History of Art and Religion, by A. W. Verrall (Cambridge University Press), according to the *Athenæum* reviewer, attempts to make out that the great Greek dramatist was a sceptic, who used the drama as a means of propagating the doctrines of Anaxagoras in safety. It says: "He was an Atheist in disguise, and when, for the plot of a tragedy, he borrowed from the mythology, he took care to present it in such a way that the miraculous and, so to say, theological elements of it should be plainly discredited, and sometimes even flouted." This view is not accepted by the *Athenæum* critic, but there is no doubt that Euripides was above the current mythology, and did not scruple to occasionally let this be seen.

* * *

The *Daily News*, noticing *The Pirates' Paradise*, says: "No quarter of the world has exceeded Spanish America in crimes of diabolical cruelty, and in no quarter of the world have so many places been named after the Trinity, the Virgin Mother, the Savior, and the Saints. As the Chinese philosopher, Lao-tse, says in his book of wisdom: 'Those who talk most about God know him least.'"

* * *

Canon Rawnsley's *Memoirs of Bishop Goodwin of Carlisle* recalls a story of a former Bishop Percy: "'Good morning,' said Bishop Percy to one of his clergy who was hoeing potatoes in his back garden. No answer. 'Nice day this.' 'I niver said it wasn't!' was the surly reply. 'I am your bishop, you know.' 'The devil you are! Nivver clapped eyes on bishop befoor sin' I've been here,' was the unceremonious rejoinder."

* * *

The opening chapters of Zola's *Rome*, now coming out in *Le Figaro*, show it is intended for a serious study of religion and the social state. It may be supposed to be a continuation of *Lourdes*. The enlightened Abbé Pierre Froment goes to Rome, the city being described with graphic realism. He speculates and writes on the still great possibilities of religion if it will again become the advocate of the poor, and the Church become the leader of a Christian socialism. But we fancy, at the outset, that the enthusiast must receive a shock when the ideal of what religion should be comes to a spot where the influence remains so strong of what it actually has been in the past.

* * *

The editor of the *Open Court* has made a metrical translation of the best known and most important of the Xenions of Goethe and Schiller. The book will be artistically printed in the shape of an album, containing on each page one Xenion with its German original. In an introductory chapter the author gives the history of the Xenions, which are satirical epigrams having the form of distichs, of which the first line is a hexameter and the second a pentameter. He explains in this chapter, by metrical and musical diagrams, the peculiarity of this form of poetry, and portrays the salient features of the golden age of German literature in which Goethe and Schiller battled hard for the new conceptions and ideals which shape most of our thought

and life to-day. "No poetry is quoted more frequently in Germany than these pithy aphorisms. They have become household words there, and deserve a place of honor in the literature of the world."

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

POSSESSION BY DEVILS.—We in England now hardly hear of demoniacal possession, except as a historical doctrine of divines. We have discarded from religious services the solemn ceremony of casting out devils from the bodies of the possessed—a rite to this day officially retained in the rituals of the Greek and Roman Churches. Cases of diabolical influence, alleged from time to time among ourselves, are little noticed except by newspaper paragraphs on superstition and imposture. If, however, we desire to understand the doctrine of possession, its origin and influence in the world, we must look beyond countries where public opinion has passed into this stage, and must study the demoniac theory, as it still prevails in lower and lowest levels of culture.—Dr. E. B. Tylor, "*Primitive Culture*," ii. 142.

GOD OF GODS.—When, in the cuneiform inscriptions, we find Tiglath-pileser called "king of kings, lord of lords," we see that there is nothing exceptional in the title "god of gods, and lord of lords, a great god, a mighty and terrible"—a description which implies that the Hebrew god is one of many distinguished by a supremacy.—Herbert Spencer, "*Data of Sociology*," sec. 202.

JOSHUA AND THE SUN.—The mightiest miracle on record was wrought to enable a bloodthirsty people to avenge themselves on their enemies! *Credat Judeus Apella*. It is a wicked libel upon the God of Love to imagine he would interrupt the harmony of the solar system for the sake of a "great slaughter." It would be a devil's deed; and, therefore, in the name of the Father of all, Amorites as well as Israelites, we declare the legend false.—Rev. T. Harley, "*Lunar Science*," p. 75.

IS THE HUMAN WILL A CHEMICAL AGENT?—Professor Ostwald, the eminent German chemist, contributes to the *Leipziger Berichte* a curious speculation, which he calls a "chemical theory of the freedom of the will." He regards the action of the human will as being precisely like the chemical process known as catalysis, in which an agent influences the time of a reaction without being itself affected. It is exactly thus that the human mind acts on matter, accelerating the chemical and mechanical processes associated with psychical activity without any expenditure of energy.

CHRISTIAN FETISHISM IN ROME.—*Mutato nomine*, it is probable that there is as much sheer fetishism among the Roman populace now as there was eighteen hundred years ago; and if Marcus Antoninus could descend from his horse and ascend the steps of the Ara Coeli church about Twelfth Day, the only thing that need strike him would be the extremely contemptible character of the modern idols as works of art.—Professor Huxley, "*Science and the Bishops*."

CHRIST AND HUMANITY.—The result of Christ's slight regard for the ties of relationship is seen in the conduct of the monks and hermits, his ascetic disciples. Too often, in their pursuit of conditions believed to be necessary for their salvation, they were led into a cruel and selfish disregard of the feelings of those who loved them. Men, driven by terror into austerity and hardness of heart, refused to say farewell to a dying mother, or to look on a sister—for fear of pollution!—J. F. Yorke, "*Notes on Evolution and Christianity*," p. 129.

Obituary.

It is with the deepest regret that I record the death of W. McCleod, which took place on December 27, at the age of thirty-one years. The deceased was a member of the Mas London Branch of the N.S.S., and one who was steadily enthusiastic in his support of the Secular cause. Personally I had known him for some time as one who could always be depended upon when work was to be done, and I have often had to thank him for his support on occasions when the nature of the meetings called for something stronger than argumentation. Of a quiet and undemonstrative character only those who knew him personally could appreciate how thoroughly his opinions had been worked out, and how steadily he supported them. By his death the Secular party loses a valuable supporter, and the sincere sympathy of its members will be freely offered to his widow in her present bereavement. The interment took place at Woodgrange Park Cemetery on the 3rd inst. A short speech was delivered over the grave by myself.

C. COHEN.

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.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall, Piccadilly): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The New Woman and the Bible"—with reference also to the later novels of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality." Tuesday, at 8.30, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac"—II.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, adjoined general meeting—important resolution. Tuesday, at 8, social gathering.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "Was Jesus Christ a Socialist?" Wednesday, at 8, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, "The Principle of Population in Relation to Socialism."

EDMONTON (Assembly Rooms): Thursday, no lecture.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "Gospel Lies and Follies."

WEST LONDON (Athenæum Hall, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): Wednesday, at 8, C. Cohen, "What is Secularism?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Living God."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, J. Veitch, "Does Belief in Immortality Affect Conduct?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, A. Holland, recitals from Shakespeare, Shelley, Tennyson, and others.

BOLTON (Spinners' Hall, St. George's-road): 11, Charles Watts, "Christian Evidences a Fallacy"; 3, "Theological Puzzles"; 6.30, "The Bible and Civilisation." Monday, at 7.30, "The Bible in Board Schools."

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Haslam, "Does Secularism Conduce to Morality?"

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, election of officers.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Cowie, "G. B. Shaw's *A Degenerate's View of Nordau*"; 6.30, Members of Discussion Class, "The Trial of the Witnesses; or, the Evangelists and Apostles at the Bar of History."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Fryer, "Education versus Religion."

IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, members' meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Scepticism: its Meaning and its Value."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Millar, "Curiosities of Olden Times." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, George Standing, "Curiosities of the Church Prayer-Book"; 6.30, "The Church v. Humanity."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, A. Aarstad will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, members' meeting; 7, W. Dyson, "Religion and Socialism—a Criticism of Miss E. Stacey." Wednesday, at 8, members' and friends' social dance.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, music and readings.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—January 9, Edmonton; 12, Leicester; 15, Shepherds Bush; 19, Sheffield; 20, Hoyaland Common; 21, Huddersfield; 22, Cleckheaton; 23, Heckmondwike; 26, Manchester. February 2, Newcastle; 5, Chester-le-street; 9, Newcastle; 12, Chester-le-Street; 16, Newcastle; 19, Chester-le-Street; 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—January 16, Edmonton; 26, Leicester. February 2, Balls Pond.

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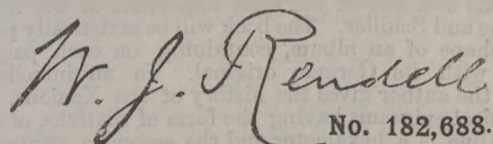
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