

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVI.—No. 4.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1896.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

DEMOCRACY AND RELIGION.

I HOLD that there is a fundamental diversity between the spirit of modern democracy and that of old religion, despite certain features of Christianity which it has in common with Buddhism, such as its appeals to the poor of the earth and its recognition that all are made of one blood. To a student of past history this incompatibility will be clear. The fundamentals of religion are based, not on human liberty, but on authority. In my *Footsteps of the Past* I have pointed out how gods grow from the ghosts of chieftains and of medicine men; how Church and State develop side by side; how gods which once were tribal evolve into gods of gods when, with large monarchies, the ruler claims to be king of kings and lord of lords; and how the large empires paved the way for the so-called universal religions.

Religion is based on fear. Where Nature is stern and men cruel, religion is strong. As men by association overcome their sense of helplessness, the solidarity of the tribe, of the nation, and of humanity becomes the binding principle of conduct. As man's life becomes less perilous and more comfortable, his religion becomes subsidiary; more attention is given to the earth and less to the skies. Every mitigation of religion comes from the increased attention given to improving the secular position of mankind. What changed the arbitrary and ferocious Jahveh of the Old Testament into the lollipop-giving Santa Claus of the Universalist? It was the diminished influence of fear; the hard-won conquest by man over the destructive powers of nature. It is this which differentiates the religion of savages from that of the civilised, and substitutes benignant Buddha for sanguinary Shiva; the love of sweet Jesus for the wrath of Jahveh. This, too, differentiates the spirit of modern democracy from that of subordination to spiritual and temporal pastors and masters.

Democracy, or self-government, is possible only with the evolution of a certain amount of peace and comfort; and it is safe to say its doctrines have grown, despite the conservative forces of religion. It owes more to Thomas Paine than to the Bible. The scriptural doctrine of government is that of a theocracy. God is a sovereign; man his subject. God's will is paramount. His arbitrary injunctions must be observed without question. As it is a maxim of monarchical law that the king can do no wrong, so it is a maxim of theology that God must be implicitly obeyed. Man has no more right to complain if elected to damnation than the clay has to question the potter why one piece is put to honorable use and another cast aside. God is especially depicted as having his peculiar people, his favorite rulers and prophets. "It is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Even the carpenter's wife's son compares God to a prince who rewards profitable slaves, but casts others into outer darkness, and orders "Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." The twelve apostles were promised that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel. Paul enjoins us to submit to the powers that be, and Peter inculcates "Fear God, honor the king."

Said Charles I., when the death of Lord Northampton was commended to his sympathy: "Is it not enough for him that he has died for his king?" No service to Deity can suffice to accord rights to his subjects. Salvation can never be from our merits, but from his grace; and, however

badly he uses us—even to the extent of dooming his sensitive creatures to eternal torments—it is vain to rail against Omnipotence. So blessed be His name for aye!

Could the Czar of Russia, that feeble imitation of his Divine Master, hear every word uttered in his dominions, he would be continually surrounded with an incense of praises. Curses, if they arose, would never be loud, if deep. The natural attitude towards an omnipotent, omniscient being is one of fear. His ministers, whose lives are devoted to exalting his name, are supposed to be his favorites; while unbelievers, who seek to efface the fear of his authority, must expect to receive the most dreadful torments. Such a being is like an earthly tyrant, who esteems only those who contribute to the maintenance of his power, and visits with the severest punishment those who question his authority.

Calvinism has always seemed to me the most consistent of creeds. If God is a sovereign, man is a slave. If God created and fashioned us, he can do with us as he pleases. If he is infinitely remote, he may be infinitely different. No present favors can ensure us against future displeasure. How many mothers have treasured some babe as the choicest gift of God, only to see it snatched away by disease?

God's method of government is arbitrary, and, consequently, anti-democratic. Just as, when crimes were done in ancient times, the chieftain who suffered demanded satisfaction, and did not care whether the precise offender suffered so long as he obtained payment—a kind of morality which still satisfies Christians in their dealings with the Chinese—so God required vengeance, and was not particular who suffered so long as he got it; visiting the sins of the fathers on the children, to the third and fourth generation, and even accepting the blood of his own innocent Son as a ransom for many. What more confidence could anyone place in such a being than in an insane despot?

The representation of sin as a debt, and the revival song,

Jesus paid it all—
All the debt I owe,

reflects a far-off government policy and a barbarous tribal morality, which arose when the sense of individual responsibility was weak. Christianity itself is a system of favoritism. It proclaims that there is no salvation under heaven save in the name of Christ. It is true it offered its salvation to women and slaves as the best way of spreading the faith, but it made no effort to ameliorate their earthly lot, and it left the heathen to the horrors of hell fire. Why, then, should we go back over eighteen hundred years for the ideals of to-day?

Democracy has new ideals. It demands liberty for every man, woman, and child to expand their nature to the uttermost. Disputing the fact of hereditary rule, it must thrust aside the fiction of apostolical succession. The Church is built on authority, with no better basis than old fignments and frauds. Democracy has no worse foe than the dogmatism which coerces reason under the pretence of divine authority. The spirit of religion is the spirit of dependence on the arbitrary will of an irresponsible being. The spirit of democracy is the spirit of independence, conscious of personal worth, power, responsibility, and dignity. It changes the centre of gravity from a throne above to a throne within; our "bosom's lord," o'er which neither God, king, nor prince can finally prevail. It substitutes the teacher for the priest; work for prayer; conduct for creed; and the republic of man for the kingdom of God.

J. M. WHEELER.

EVIDENCE: REAL AND IMAGINARY.

PROBABLY the vast majority of orthodox Christians accept the belief in Christianity without studying the nature of the evidence which induces them to do so. They adopt this faith as a legacy from their predecessors, without making any inquiry as to whether or not any reason exists for their becoming the recipients of a ready-made belief. Hence, a faith that originated in ages of ignorance and superstition is transferred from one generation to another simply because its evidential value has never been properly tested. Just as thousands of persons go to church Sunday after Sunday for no other reason than that they had attended such places from their infancy, so by many Christianity is professed because it was taught them in early life, at a period when they lacked the desire and ability to investigate why they were induced to accept the belief. This will account, to a large extent, for what is termed "the extensive profession of Christianity"; for, as experience has shown, it is a difficult task to eradicate from the human mind the impressions made in the morning of life. The clergy know this, therefore they are always anxious to have the control of the education of the young, in order that the infant mind shall be imbued with the influence of theology. If the first inculcation of religious teaching were reserved for the age of maturity, there would doubtless be a great falling off in the number of Christian adherents.

Of course, some professed Christians are so as the result of thoughtful consideration of what they regard as evidences of the truth of their faith. But even these believers frequently mistake for real evidence that which is purely imaginary. In order to clearly distinguish between the two it is necessary that a person should be free from all prejudice and preconceived inclinations. If, in entering upon the investigation of any subject, the mind is biased towards any one special conclusion, that very fact would prevent a fair estimate being formed as to the true nature of the evidence necessary to support any deduction that may be arrived at. This is particularly the case as regards the study of Christian evidences, inasmuch as the students have been trained to believe, frequently before examination, that the Christian claims are true. Moreover, the penalty threatened for arriving at a conclusion adverse to the truth of Christianity is so severe that it is likely to sway the judgment in the process of examination. It is folly to exclaim, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," if it has been decided what is "good" before the endeavor to "prove" commences. Besides, the belief in Christianity is fashionable, and to reject it often means pecuniary loss, and is attended by social ostracism, which are important factors that affect the estimation as to whether evidence is real or imaginary.

That at least two kinds of evidence exist must be admitted. Take, for instance, geometry and history. The axioms of geometry are self-evident, and its propositions are capable of demonstration; while history may be trustworthy, but its truth is only probable. Every extraordinary event related in history is open to the objection that it may not be true. As to whether our own observation or that of another is the more trustworthy depends upon the question of competency—that is, which is the better qualified to discern what is true. Supposing a belief depends upon the interpretation of the universe, in that case those who know most of it, through studying its manifestations, would be able to furnish better evidence as to its nature and potency than those who had devoted but little study to the subject. The same may be said of a belief founded on history. If we have the testimony of known competent observers of the events they record, we are likely to get trustworthy evidence; but if we have conflicting accounts of writers, who relate, in contradictory reports, extraordinary events of which they had only heard, we cannot rely upon their statements. This is one reason why we do not accept the New Testament as being historically accurate. Most of its writers record marvellous events which were told them, and no indication is afforded that these writers ever attempted to verify what it is said they heard. It is not here contended that we are justified in objecting to believe in events simply because we cannot understand them; but the fact remains that our belief in such events must be influenced by the nature of the testimony which they can command,

To some the position here taken may appear but the A B C of credibility; but to us it seems of the utmost importance, as it involves a question too little studied by acceptors of evidence. Christians may have their "convictions," or "assurances of faith"; but both depend upon evidence either real or imaginary. They speak of "faith," but this *must* rest upon evidence either true or false. Those who dispute this should ask themselves: "Why have I a faith?" Surely it was obtained by some intellectual process, however defective its character. Even if faith is based upon trust, or hope, or wish, these are all connected with the functions of the mind. Faith *above* reason can have no evidential support, for it would be above the very faculty which is absolutely necessary to all evidence. Theologians, apparently, do not recognise this fact, hence they urge that those doctrines they teach, which are thoroughly unreasonable, are "above reason"; while the truth is, they are *contrary* to reason, and therefore have no claim upon us.

Let us now consider what justifies us in disbelieving any statement, teaching, or proposition submitted to our attention. We may not believe either through the entire want of evidence, or in consequence of its insufficiency; but to justify disbelief it is necessary that the reasons against the truth of any particular allegation should be stronger than those in its favor. Frequently, if we inquire into the particulars of any extraordinary event which is said to have happened, we shall find reasons, from its very character, to doubt its occurrence. In describing the marvellous, persons are apt to give erroneous descriptions of what really took place. For instance, an example of this is given when people speak of those who are thought to be dead "coming to life." The fact is, the report in such cases is based upon the mistake of supposing that the individuals who "came to life" had been really dead. No number of witnesses to this imaginary restoration would disprove the mistake made as to the parties being dead. The general observation of mankind makes the mistake probable, and the coming to life improbable, for the reason that, according to human experience, when persons are really dead they remain so. It is quite possible that a thing may be true that does not accord with our personal experience; but whatever is opposed to all general experience, and contrary to known natural laws, we submit, may be reasonably disbelieved, in spite of attestations to the contrary, by whomsoever made. An accurate and un-biased opinion can result only from the free exercise of the critical spirit. Those who have witnessed apparently extraordinary phenomena in the presence of average observers must have noticed their utter incapacity to form a correct judgment upon such events. Persons who readily understand ordinary events become thoroughly incapable of weighing evidence in reference to the wonderful and the marvellous. Take the case of ghosts: unbelievers never see them; they do not appear in houses inhabited by Freethinkers. We agree with Büchner: "There never has been, and never will be, a real apparition which could make us believe or assume that the soul of a deceased individual continues to exist: it is dead, never to return" (*Force and Matter*, p. 198). "That the soul of a deceased person," says Burmeister, "does not reappear after death is not contested by rational people. Spirits and ghosts are seen only by diseased or superstitious individuals" (quoted by Büchner, *ibid*).

In reference to the extraordinary elements in Christianity, some of them are of such a nature that it is quite impossible to obtain evidence in their favor—such as the Virgin birth, the raising of the saints from their graves, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the resurrection, and the ascension. Not one of these theological figments can be substantiated by evidence that would be admitted as conclusive proof in any of our law courts. They appear to us to be mere dogmas, which originated in the fertile brains of some of the leading "lights" of the Church. To us it seems a waste of time and energy to seek for corroborative proof of that which never had any objective existence that is subject to the ordinary laws of evidence. Christianity is based, not upon that which is capable of demonstration, but rather upon faith, sentiment, and often unjustifiable inference.

CHARLES WATTS.

Truth is the child of Time.—Immanuel Kant.

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

"How came you to be an Infidel?" This is a question that we have been asked over and over again, and we suppose it will be asked time and time yet again. Speaking for ourself, we answer, By reading, studying, and preaching the Bible. If we had not been a preacher, perhaps we would have continued to be a Christian. We were taught to believe in the Bible from our childhood, and, although there were many things about it that our sense of justice revolted at, we believed it to be a divine inspiration, and, therefore, in some mysterious way correct. But, in the course of time, our duty was to expound its mysteries to other people, and where, in trying to do this, we put it to a rational test, the conviction that it was only a fallible book of human origin grew upon us, until there was no honorable escape from open and avowed infidelity. We reached this by a long, painful struggle that ended in the sacrifice of much that we had honestly attained by our sincere devotion to the Church. Our experience and observation lead us to fear that many preachers have realised what we did as to the truth of the Bible, but they have not been willing to make known their real convictions and accept the social consequences of revolt. The Bible is its own best interpreter, and we cannot understand how any rational person can read it with careful attention and not discover its manifest fallibility. We think it likely that many have discovered this, but from mercenary motives refuse to make it known.

In our opinion, no book has made more Infidels than the Bible, and our advice to any honest thinker who wishes to know the truth about this much-abused and misused book is to read it and give it a chance to speak for itself. Test it by rational processes just as you do other books, and if you are thoroughly honest with it and with yourself you will become an Infidel. Reverence for the Bible as a divine inspiration is generally fastened upon people, as it was upon us, in their childhood. If children are let alone until they learn to reason logically, you can never convince them that the Bible is anything more than a human production. The method of the Churches is to fill the minds of children with a superstitious awe of the Bible before they are old enough to read it critically, and many go through life believing it without ever subjecting its utterances to anything like a rational test.

Another question we are often asked is, whether or not we are as happy now as when we were a Christian. To which we invariably answer, Yes; and more so, though this is not to say that we are perfectly happy. This is not a good world to be happy in. We do not understand how any good person can be happy in the perpetual presence of so much pain, anguish, and sorrow as confronts us every day of our lives.

As a Christian, we were taught that in the world to come there is a heaven for such as believe in Jesus, and a hell of fire and brimstone for those who cannot. When we believed in Jesus, and therefore supposed (for we were never sure of it) that we would get to heaven, we were overwhelmed with the thought that the great majority were destined to an eternal hell. Now, we submit that any person who can look this fact in the face and then be happy is without a heart that can be touched with human woe. It is to us a source of satisfaction and pride to be able to say that we were never happy as a Christian, and it was our unhappiness at beholding such a possibility that drove us into the Christian ministry. As Liberals, we believe in one general condition for all who have lived in this distracted and diseased world. We do not know that there is another life, but we feel sure that if there is we will all have as good a chance for happiness there as we have had here; and if there is no such life, then death will be a merciful relief to us all, and one condition will be the end of life. We have never seen the day, either as a Christian or an Infidel, that we would not prefer an endless sleep to life eternal, if only one soul is to be eternally tormented in a Christian hell.

Perfect happiness is an impossibility in this world, unless it be to heartless beings; but, with the appalling threat of eternal punishment removed, we have found life a thousand times more endurable, and we believe that, if all men were rid of religious superstition, virtue would have a better

chance. With virtue there would come a disposition to be just; justice would remove much of the evil with which we are surrounded, and in a world where everyone could have a home with food, raiment, and health, perfect happiness would be possible.

"What advantage has the Infidel or Liberal over the believing Christian?" we are sometimes asked.

It is something of an advantage to be rid of the superstitious fear of an angry and revengeful God, and the hell into which he is supposed to be going to damn most of his earthly creatures. There is also an advantage in being free to think as one can, and to speak as one thinks. Why should we go through life fearing a myth and dreading a doom that has no warrant of reason or common sense? Besides the mental freedom he enjoys, the Liberal loses nothing of moral worth. All the avenues to a good, upright, and honorable life are as widely open to him as they are to the Christian, and thirteen years of experience have taught us that as a Liberal one can better reconcile himself to the natural conditions and environments of life, and thereby derive more pleasure from living.

"But do you not sometimes doubt the correctness of your position?" say some. Because Christians go through the world doubting at every step, they imagine that Liberals must be harassed in the same way; but our experience is that they are not. The fundamental principles of Liberalism are as demonstrative as the problems of Euclid. He who is true to himself and his fellow man can have no doubt as to his own moral integrity. Virtue brings to everyone its own reward, and when a man knows that he is honestly following up the convictions that have come to him through the exercise of his reason, there is no room for doubt. The Liberal accepts nature as all-in-all, and makes the best he can of life, feeling well assured that no harm can come to him that is not common to the race. He is in no sense exempt from the common weakness of the race, and commits many blunders; but through all he is constantly sustained by an unwavering purpose to do the very best he can with the opportunities that he has.

"What motive have you for doing good?" say some. To this question we always feel like asking in reply, What motive have you for eating and drinking? If one never hungered, he would often neglect to eat. Doing good satisfies nature in the well-regulated character that is as real as physical hunger or thirst. A hunting dog will pursue the game, and a moral man will do good. If well born and well taught, men love to do good, and only wish they could do more than they do. Is it possible that men do good only through the fear of hell or the hope of heaven? We do not believe this. We know it is not true. If we would enjoy life, we must help others to enjoy it. He who loves freedom should seek the freedom of others. Self-preservation and self-respect beget in us a love of virtue, and supply every needed motive for doing good; and the really good man will do good regardless of future rewards and punishments.

J. D. SHAW.

—Independent Pulpit.

Sayce and Moses.

Professor Sayce is particularly indignant at what he calls the "cocksureness" of his opponents; but his own arguments in support of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch do not by any means savor of extreme caution. The reasoning on which he chiefly relies would appear to be somewhat as follows: Literary culture existed in Egypt and some other countries before the time of Moses. Therefore, the Israelites must at that time have practised the art of writing. Therefore Moses must have written something. What Moses wrote cannot have been lost. Therefore Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Q.E.D. It must be admitted that this reasoning presents the appearance of a rather top-heavy erection. At every point an assumption is made which is, to say the least, disputable. It is strange that Professor Sayce should need to be reminded of a conspicuous example which would alone suffice to overthrow his argument. What fact is more certain than that the Founder of Christianity himself left no writings behind him? Yet the Jews in the first century of our era were undoubtedly a "literary people."—Professor A. A. Bevan, in "The Contemporary Review."

THE BACKBONE OF CHRISTIANITY.

As proof that Christianity is the true religion, a minister in Cleveland recently cited the rapid spread of the gospel in the twelfth century. He held that, because it was first preached to the obscure and lowly, people without means, it was proof of the truth and divine origin of the Bible.

Now, what is the sum of the teachings of Christianity? From first to last man is either coaxed with sweetmeats, or threatened with a red-hot poker. Had Christ taught (presuming he ever did teach anything) that he was the son of God, and that men should practise virtue for virtue's sake, it is doubtful if we should ever have been cursed with the Christian religion.

There would be nothing to gain; the average man would have reasoned, and he would have been content to go his way. But when it became known that this God, who controlled everything, held out such glittering inducements, many joined the ranks for what could be gained. The Christian religion took advantage of some elements of human nature which made it possible to advance rapidly. Those same elements exist to-day, and are being taken advantage of right along.

These elements are childish, for they are stronger and more pronounced in children; but the average man possesses a very large share. If it is childish now, what must it have been eighteen hundred years ago? Promise a child some reward, especially if it frees him from a little labor or a few hours from school, and you have an ideal Christian until the bribe is paid. Promise a child a sound thrashing, or threaten him with the "bogie man," and his behavior will be excellent until his fears are allayed.

Now, this desire for reward or gain, and this fear of punishment, are what gave Christianity its start. The more ignorant a man is, the greater the element of childishness in his make-up. No man will work for nothing. He must have reward or promise of reward. No man will pick up a red-hot iron willingly.

What contempt is shown a man who will not work? What stress the pulpit-pounders lay on the fact that you *don't have to work in heaven!* That is the key to the whole thing.

There are some natures that can be controlled only through fear of punishment. Hell-fire has been prepared for this class. Was there ever a fake put on the market which promised something for nothing but thousands of gullible people bit at the bait? Credulity and the inborn longing for a toilless and careless life are the groundwork of Christianity. Many savage traits still exist in our natures, and this religion offers mysticism and superstition in new cloaks, and the gaping crowds swallow it as they swallow Barnum's mermaid and the fire-eater.

This minister, continuing, said that merely living for gain was not life. The savage in Africa manages to satisfy his wants, but we would hardly call that life. That is true enough, but why didn't he finish? He should have said that savages everywhere have some form of religion, some god, and they have to knuckle down one way or another. Of course their ideas and methods are crude, but then they are not themselves civilised and refined. This god idea is nothing but a savage idea developed and changed in form. It has not yet been civilised out of all of us. Now-a-days Christianity is a business qualification, and ninety-nine out of a hundred Christians are such for cash, except when scared. When the Christian approaches death, the "bogie" which has been used to frighten him all his life, he makes about the same effort to appear righteous before his God as an untidy house wife does to appear neat when company comes unannounced.

As a sample of the beauty in the Christian religion, I want to tell about a missionary whom I once heard lecture. He had spent many years among the Indians. In the course of his lecture he showed two large pictures—one represented the Indians as the missionaries found them, the other as they left them. The first showed a group of Indians gathered about their wigwams, which were erected on the bank of a stream; the women were busy, and the men were mending canoes, making arrows, etc. An air of peace and prosperity was everywhere. The second picture represented a group of miserable-looking beings in ill-fitting clothes, cleaning fish on a dock. Great heaps of fish were piled about them. "This," said the missionary, "shows how we found them, in ignorance, and without a

knowledge of God. That shows how we left them, working for their living."

This failed to convert me, for I think I would prefer the prosperous, wild, free life, and the smell of flowers, to a knowledge of God, a pile of fish, and a miserable existence. I'll venture to say the missionaries never promised them this when they went among them.

The educated man who places truth above ambition cannot swallow Christian doctrines. Did two persons ever tell the same story alike? Well, suppose Christ did say anything at all; how much exaggeration would be added while that saying travelled one hundred miles in those days, or these either? The chances are that Christ never claimed to be the Son of God. The honor was thrust upon him, and it got him into trouble. If he said a sensible thing, the ignorant who heard it thought he must get his wisdom from a higher source. They never gave him credit for knowing anything. He was merely a mouth-piece.

The preachers tell their flocks that Christianity made possible the virtue and civilisation that now prevail. If they will reverse the statement, they will tell the truth. It is the evolution and development of life that has made Christianity possible. When the God idea is cultivated out of our natures, along with some other relics of savagery, Christianity and its bloody record will disappear.

—*Truthseeker.*

G. H. LONG.

HELL.

If Christianity were only stupid and unscientific, if its God were ignorant and kind, if it promised eternal joy to believers, and if the believers practised the forgiveness they teach, I, for one, should let the faith alone.

But there is another side to Christianity. It is not only stupid, but it is malicious. It is not only unscientific, but it is heartless. Its God is not only ignorant, but infinitely cruel. It not only promises the faithful an eternal reward, but declares that nearly all of the children of men, imprisoned in the dungeons of God, will suffer eternal pain. This is the savagery of Christianity. This is why I hate its unthinkable God, its impossible Christ, its inspired lies, its selfish, heartless heaven.

Christians believe in infinite torture, in eternal pain.

Eternal pain!

All the meanness of which the heart of man is capable is in that one word—Hell.

That word is a den, a cave, in which crawl the slimy reptiles of revenge.

That word certifies to the savagery of primitive man.

That word is the depth, the dungeon, the abyss from which civilised man has emerged.

That word is the disgrace, the shame, the infamy of our revealed religion.

That word fills all the future with the shrieks of the damned.

That word brutalises the New Testament, changes the Sermon on the Mount to hypocrisy and cant, and pollutes and hardens the very heart of Christ.

That word adds an infinite horror to death, and makes the cradle as terrible as the coffin.

That word is the assassin of joy, the mocking murderer of hope.

That word extinguishes the light of life and wraps the world in gloom.

That word drives Reason from its throne, and gives the crown to madness.

That word drove pity from the hearts of men, stained countless swords with blood, lighted faggots, forged chains, built dungeons, erected scaffolds, and filled the world with poverty and pain.

That word is a coiled serpent in the mother's breast, that lifts its fanged head and hisses in her ear, "Your child will be the fuel of eternal fire."

That word blots from the firmament the star of hope, and leaves the heavens black.

That word makes the Christian's God an eternal torturer, an everlasting inquisitor—an infinite wild beast.

This is the Christian prophecy of the eternal future:—

No hope in hell.

No pity in heaven.

No mercy in the heart of God.

R. G. INGERSOLL

FREETHOUGHT IS FOR PEACE.

"A war with England would be a blessing to this country, as it would 'square all accounts.'"

SUCH is the foolish utterance of a Kansas paper. Had it been the cry of a Christian, we should not have been surprised; but coming as it does from a man who calls himself a liberal, it is amazing, and most painful. We have no accounts to square with England, or with any other country. We have no cause for war with them. The intelligent Freethinkers of the world stand for solidarity, and are unalterably opposed to robbing the people and slaughtering multitudes of them because individuals in one country have injured individuals in another country. Talk about a war "squaring accounts"! It is the language of purblind savagery. War squares no accounts. Given a war with England, and who or what shall "square accounts" with the murdered soldiers of both nations, with the cripples, with the sorrowing fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, children and lovers of the slain? Instead of war squaring accounts, it opens millions of accounts that can never be squared by the guilty Jingoos who clamor for it, or by the guilty rulers who launch it, or by any others. It is very important that Freethinkers put themselves, and keep themselves, on record in regard to the barbarism of war. No small part of the moral strength of the Freethought party in England is due to the fact that the representative men and women of that party and its journals have protested against the "unjust wars by England waged." Bradlaugh, from the beginning of his career and to its close, never failed to demand fair play for the tribes and nations with which England's "statesmen" and rapacious tradesmen were constantly embroiling the nation, and he truly represented the party whose elected chief he was for so many years. While primates of the Church were blessing the weapons and minions of wholesale murder, Bradlaugh and his co-workers were doing all they could to put reason and arbitration in the place of the national duel. Now English Freethinkers can point to that comparative record, and with it shame the Christian apologists who falsely claim that the Church alone makes for civilisation. It should be equally possible for the Freethinkers of the United States to thus conclusively answer their opponents. In the ante-bellum days the Christian Church in this country dared not antagonise the barbarism of slavery, lest it should "hurt the Church." It was a short-sighted and disastrous caution, for to-day the Freethinker finds this cowardice one of the most effective stones to throw at the ecclesiastical organisations. Let us bear this lesson in mind, lest, not heeding it, our successors be truthfully told that we dared not protest through the press and upon the platform against the barbarism of war—dared not rebuke truculent jingoism.

—Lucifer.

E. C. WALKER.

Obituary.

M. FLOQUET, the French senator, who died at Paris on January 18, left directions for a private and non-religious funeral. In the days of the Empire he was one of the boldest and steadiest of Republican propagandists, and after the death of Gambetta it was hoped that he would be able to take his friend's place. But Floquet was rather the orator than the statesman, and shone most in opposition. His duel with General Boulanger, to whom he said that "at his age Bonaparte was dead," made him famous.

DIED, at his residence on Friday, the 17th inst., James Willis, aged thirty-eight years, from that scourge of the human race, consumption. He was brought up in the Christian fold, and when he heard Mr. Charles Bradlaugh for the first time in Newcastle he was so delighted with him that he said if he had wealth he would travel about the country listening to all his lectures. From that time he was a true and consistent Freethinker. His health broke down about three years ago, and for the last six months he had to discontinue work. He suffered much, but bore his lot with great fortitude, like the true, brave, honest man that he was. He was buried at Preston Cemetery, North Shields, on Sunday.—THOMAS THOMPSON.

"Know thyself" was written over the portal of the antique world. Over the portal of the new world, "Be thyself" shall be written.—Babalanja.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

THERE'S a play being acted just now on the stage,
'Tis entitled *The Sign of the Cross*;
And in London it seems to be getting the rage,
Does this wonderful *Sign of the Cross*.
Now, you're all well aware, if this play you would see,
At the theatre door you must part with a fee;
But free gratis, if you will accompany me,
I'll show you the sign of the Cross!

Do you see that big church with a "pub" by its side?
Now the two are a sign of the Cross,
And you'll find them together throughout the world wide—
Yes, you'll find this great sign of the Cross.
For the fact is, and doubtless to you it seems queer,
That in all "heathen" lands where the Christians appear
They erect their big buildings for Bible and beer—
Yes, they set up this sign of the Cross!

For a moment just look at that foul, reeking slum,
'Tis a hideous sign of the Cross;
Its inhabitants drown all their mis'ry in rum,
Their condition's a sign of the Cross.
For a tree by its fruit is in all cases known;
Christ has reigned all these ages—the fruit here is shown;
And with facts such as these, if you're honest, you'll own
That this slum is a sign of the Cross!

There's a placard outside that news-shop, you'll observe,
'Tis a terrible sign of the Cross;
For it states what with horror should thrill every nerve,
Does this blood-curdling sign of the Cross;
It announces that England's "preparing for war,"
That the Christians are arming to shed Christian gore,
As too oft in the past they have shed it before,
For bloodshed's a sign of the Cross!

ESS JAY BEE.

A MEMORY.

WE dragged her out of the tiny lake. Her eyes had closed for ever. What a pretty spot it was! The ripples on the water's surface tenderly lifted the pure white lilies, and the film of bright green weeds resting on the water looked like a carpet for fairy feet. It seemed sacrilege to tear her sweet body from those depths—depths so dark as to appear bottomless.

Here, far from sound of voices, far from clanging bells and rattling wheels, she had sought eternal calm. Mayhap her final deed was quiet unplanned—unthought of until she drank in the soporific air; saw the inviting softness of the pool, the soothing shade, the sombre colors; felt the solemn calm, and, spawned from Nature, she, child of that infinite mother, went back to her bosom and nestled in its loveliest nook.

Who shall blame her? Where is he who dares condemn? She asked not for existence. It was thrust upon her. She did her little best; she worked, and loved, and suffered—in brain and body how she suffered! Her travail now is over. Her cheeks will no longer drip with scalding tears; her loyal heart has done fluttering like a caged robin; her fingers will no more bleed to earn food—bread to keep going her poor life, and the lives of the fruit of her love. Yes; who shall blame her? Look at the worn face, still lovely in outline; regard those sunken eyes, those wisps of fingers. Disease, born of penury, had had her in its grip. She could struggle no longer. Her babes were starving. She wandered from the sight—she was no more use to them. She sought loneliness. She found it, and under placid wavelets, and nodding branches, and floating flowers she closed her tired eyes and extended her weary limbs—for ever.

A. G.

A Christian nation has never had the slightest respect for the rights of barbarians; neither has any Christian sect any respect for the rights of other sects. Anciently, the sects discussed with fire and sword, and even now something happens almost every day to show that the old spirit that was in the Inquisition still slumbers in the Christian breast. . . . If Christ, in fact, said, "I come not to bring peace, but a sword," it is the only prophecy in the New Testament that has been literally fulfilled.—R. G. Ingersoll.

We have never witnessed the construction of a world. We only perceive the everlasting flux and reflux of phenomena, the ceaseless pulsation of nature and life, evolution, transformation, birth, death, and birth again. But Nature herself is dumb as to her whence or whither.—Professor W. Knight, "Aspects of Theism."

ACID DROPS.

LADY HENRY SOMERSET has given up poor drunken Jane Cakebread, who has been so many times before the London magistrates. Jane was taken to the Home at Reigate amidst a great blowing of trumpets. The Christian method of reformation was going to work wonders. But the patient has given so much trouble that they are glad to get rid of her. She is now certified to be insane, and science will have to take her in hand, when perhaps it is too late.

Amelia Mary Payne, an elderly maiden lady, is doing twenty-one days' imprisonment for disturbing "divine service" at a Clapham gospel-shop. She had been summoned several times for the same offence. No doubt the poor woman is demented, and it would be better to keep her out of the church than to send her to prison.

Charles Wilson, a Yaxley laborer, has been fined twelve-and-six for smoking in church at a Watch Night service. It was a dear smoke, and the poor fellow has our sympathy. He is a little in advance of his age. By and by the churches will all have smoking-pews, probably in the gallery.

"Deadheads" are plentiful in America. They are gentlemen who go to theatres or travel by rail without paying. There are some of the fraternity in England. "Base is the slave that pays!" said Pistol, and we may therefore call them Pistolians. This sect appears to include the Rev. Arthur W. Griffiths, of Tottenham, said to be the sub-editor of a religious newspaper, who has been fined £10 and £3 9s. costs (or three months' imprisonment) for travelling on the Midland Railway on three different occasions without having paid his fare, and with intent to defraud.

The Rev. John Andrews has been adjudged to pay a Shrewsbury tailor named Hamilton £350 as damages for the abduction of his wife. Mrs. Hamilton used to play the organ and assist the reverend gentleman in his mission. This holy work became stronger than her love of her husband, and her two children and the man of God and his assistant have transferred their mission to Canada. The judge, in directing the jury, said the case was "a very shocking one."

Some pious busybody has been seeking opinions upon hymns. The Prince of Wales says that his favorite hymn is "Nearer, my God, to Thee." Mr. Herbert Spencer has no favorite hymn. He says that he was made to learn hymns as a penalty when a child, and, consequently, "the feeling associated with that penalty became a feeling associated with hymns in general."

We hear that, in answer to the widely-circulated inquiry as to "Hymns which have Influenced Me," Mr. Booth puts down "For Me, Me, Me"; Lord Burton puts down "Glorious Beer"; Dr. Parker, "Not for Joseph"; Mr. H. P. Hughes, "Bring forth the Golden Lyre"; and Mr. W. T. Stead, "E dunno where 'e are."

The Rev. J. Tristram, minister at Holloway Chapel, attended at the Wirksworth Police-station, and obtained police protection for the chapel, there being a squabble there every Sunday, after the collection, as to the disposal of the funds. The chapel is heavily in debt, and some of the congregation want their interest paid.

The Rev. Alfred John Blagden, vicar of Tweedmouth, ascribes his bankruptcy to getting into the hands of money-lenders. He gave, on one occasion, a bill for £55, payable in three months, in return for £35, unaware, he says, that he was paying about 400 per cent. It seems the poor man was bled dry by the leeches, to whom he turned the other cheek, until he remembered that relief might be found in the Bankruptcy Court.

The following story, which is going the rounds, about Barney Barnato, has possibly been in print already—it certainly ought to have been if it has not—but it is so good that, at the risk of being told "chestnuts," we cannot help giving it here. Two months or so ago a country parson wrote thus to Barney: "My aim has always been investment, not speculation; when your bank came out I regarded its shares as an investment, and purchased four hundred of them at four pounds, sinking my little all in them, and a good deal more. They have now fallen to two pounds, and I am undone. I cannot face my parish as a bankrupt. What am I to do? I throw myself on your mercy." Barnato was deeply moved by this appeal, and replied that he would buy back the shares at four pounds. On receipt of this reply the worthy parson promptly wired his broker: "Buy four hundred shares Barnato Bank stock at two pounds, and send them round to Barnato Brothers, who will give you four pounds for them." Of such are the Children of Light!

The editors of the *Methodist Times* and of the *Methodist Recorder* have been exhibiting their Christian feelings towards each other. A letter from Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes, soliciting a shilling for the West of London Sisterhood, and asking each recipient to write two similar letters to friends, came under the notice of the *Methodist Recorder*, which said: "Anybody receiving one of these 'snowball' letters will render a public service by putting it into the fire." Mrs. H. P. Hughes writes that she "cannot understand in the least the disrespectful terms in which you describe a method of helping the work of Christ"; and Mr. Curnock, the editor of the *Methodist Recorder*, retorts that this method is condemned by all good people, and that, if Mrs. Hughes's example were followed, "it will become an intolerable nuisance, and, in all probability, a facile instrument of fraud." Now the editor of the *Methodist Times* complains that the editor of the *Methodist Recorder* has gone out of his way to attack his wife.

"Ex-Monk Widdows" is laboring in the Lord's vineyard again at Norwich. *Daylight* of that city writes: "I have a lively recollection of twitting him on one occasion with his hypocrisy, when, with a disgusting and blasphemous expression, he said: 'Jesus Christ is a — good thing for me; I made seventeen quid out of him last week.'"

The *All Saints' Weekly Gazette*, of South Shields, is a poor sheet, hardly fit for a pipe-light. The vicar and editor seems, like the advertising butterman, desirous of undercutting his rivals, for he makes the following notice prominent: "The Marriage Fees at All Saints' are 8s. 6d., including banns and marriage lines. At the Register Office, we understand, they are 9s. 7d. Moral: Be married at church." We understand that the registrar's fees in London are only 7s. 6d. But there is a better reason for marrying at the register office. The women do not have to make any false vows of obedience. Moral: Do not be married at church. Keep the parson's finger out of the pie.

"Mohammedanism was propagated by the sword" is an observation frequently made by Christians, who are unaware how largely the extension of their faith was achieved by the same instrument. Carlyle pertinently asked how Islam got the sword? We notice in our American exchanges, while the general papers have been indulging in tall talk, the Freethought papers have all been for peace. The *Moslem World*, which is the organ of Islam in America, has the following: "A standing army is a standing shame to the nation that maintains it. A man with a musket on his shoulder or a sword by his side has to be supported by the man with a hoe or a hammer in his hand. War robs not only the present generation, but the unborn. It is every way a curse. The trade of butchering men is the worst that man has ever learned."

The *Dog-Owners' Supplement to the Bazaar* calls attention to a scare against dogs in the United States, and cites the following from a monthly Christian publication on "The Dog Question": "Now, my boy or girl, whichever you are," runs the concluding passage, which contains the moral of the whole, "drop this nonsense about dogs. They are demanding valuable time that should be employed in teaching such as you. A dog cannot love you. You cannot love a dog. Naught beside a divine soul can love or be loved. *Chloroform your dog, and take to reading your Testament.*" The pious writer well illustrates that rabies is not confined to the canine race.

The *Morning Leader* notices that, in spite of the dog being the friend of man—his most faithful servant, who will stick to him through thick and thin, and mourn over him when dead—the term "dog" is used throughout literature as one of reproach. "The Bible," it says, "is peculiarly rich in such references. Dogs are distinctly ruled out of heaven, and in very bad company too. When St. Paul wishes to denounce false apostles because of their impudence and greedy love of sordid gain, he calls them dogs. Both Solomon and St. Peter refer to backsliders as dogs returning to their vomit. David and Isaiah between them use the word dog or dogs as synonymous with the Devil, persecutors, and false teachers."

Protestant street-preachers are still harassed at Sligo. On Sunday there were serious disturbances, and the police found it necessary to charge disorderly mobs.

Sunday is not a *dies non* in India. The law has ceased to recognise it as such. The prohibition of 1852 against officials making over or assuming charge on a Sunday has been modified.

Some Chinamen who were called as witnesses in a New York court last week took the Bible oath, saying that it was binding on their consciences. One of them, Charles Tong Sing by name, who is Christianised, said he knew he should drop dead in the court-room if he deviated from the

exact truth after swearing on the Bible. Having been so sworn, they proceeded without more ado to give utterly contradictory and irreconcilable versions of the same story; and Charlie Tong Sing demonstrated his ability to outlie the whole lot. This shows the hopeful sign that, while Chinamen are obtuse in some respects, Christian example is not lost upon them altogether.—*Truthseeker*.

In a Natal paper there is a mission story in the form of an interview with a young man named J. C. Hancock, who, fired with religious enthusiasm, joined an industrial mission started in East Africa. The mission has about a dozen stations in Nyassaland, and Hancock went as missionary about eighteen months ago. He alleges that misleading reports were sent home. An appeal, he says, was made for a considerable sum of money to enable the mission to carry on its industrial work, and it was said that at the station with which he was connected there were two hundred acres of coffee, whereas there were not more than five or six acres.

Several people who thought matters were not right reported this to the home supporters of the mission, and a young man was sent out from England to investigate. At first he found that the official reports from the mission were misleading, but after he had spent some time with one of the local leaders he changed his mind, and took home a statement accounting for every penny spent, and certifying that everything was satisfactory. That, says Hancock, is false, and he asserts that the people at the head stations prefer money-making to mission work. He also says that when he and another missionary were down with fever they were neglected by the managers, and that some of the missionaries drink to excess. He appears to have hinted that even worse things than these were done, in the remark: "There are a good many things I am ashamed to tell." The name of the mission is not given, but it is a Protestant one.

The Rev. S. Fletcher Williams repudiates "The Apostles' Creed" in the *Echo* (January 17). He says very truly that "its name is delusive; it is not the Apostles' Creed. They knew nothing about it. It was not composed until after their time." He further points out that the Creed is a Roman Catholic document, and comes through the Catholic Church. But as much can be said for almost the entire body of Christian literature.

Brother C. C. Moore is inquisitive, and wants to know when God created hell and the Devil. He says: "The Bible explains that when God had gotten through the job of creating, and was fixing to take a good rest over Sunday, he looked over the whole job and said that it was 'good.' If he had made the Devil at that time, did God say that the Devil was 'good,' and where in the hell was the Devil, and what in the hell was he doing, that we don't hear anything about him until we find him getting into hogs and women away down in the days of the New Testament?"

The Rev. H. R. Haweis has been lecturing on "Christ in the South Seas." It appears, however, that it was Mr. Haweis's grandfather who introduced Christianity in that quarter. Christ had given them over for hundreds of years to semi-starvation, savagery, and cannibalism; but unto him be all the glory for the change to clothes, consumption, gin, and gospel.

The Palace of the Popes at Avignon is now used as a barrack, but ten million francs are to be raised to transform the place into a museum, illustrative not only of its own history, but also that of the surrounding region.

The six apartments in the Vatican kept for the private use of Roderic Borgio, Pope Alexander VI. (1492-1503), a successor of St. Peter, who, Mosheim says, was destitute of decency and shame, have long been closed, or used only for stores. They, however, contain valuable pictures by Pinturicchio, which the present pontiff thinks should be thrown open to the public.

The *Monthly Letter* of the Protestant Alliance mentions among the doctrines taught in the day schools of the Church of England: "Prayers for the Dead; Idolatry; Confession of Sins to an earthly priest; Priestly Absolution; Monastic and Conventional Institutions; Baptismal Regeneration; and the Sacrifice of the Mass. These are doctrines for which Protestant England is now paying. Dissenting children are forced into Church schools, and the Conscience Clause is but a sham protection; and the clericals are working their hardest to get extra grants for their sacerdotal schools, where they hope to teach children to grovel in the confessional at the feet of the priest in Absolution."

In the case of the venerable T. S. Castell, the archdeacon of Demerara, whose body was found in the Serpentine, evidence was given that the archdeacon suffered from nervous depression. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned."

George E. Macdonald writes in the *Truthseeker*: "If I had noted it in time, I might have sent to Mr. Conway's Paine Exhibition in London a copy of the Lancaster, Pa., *Intelligencer and Advertiser* of October, 1800, containing this advertisement:—

Just Published,
And for Sale by the Printers,
AN INVESTIGATION
Of the false, fabulous, and blasphemous
Misrepresentation of
TRUTH,

Set forth by Thomas Paine in his *Age of Reason*,
Dedicated to the Protection of the United
States of America.

By A DELAWARE WAGONER.

Also dedicated to the Protection of the U.S.

I wonder if anyone now living ever saw a copy of A Delaware Wagoner's 'Investigation.' I think the man probably drove a mule team."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has been publishing an account of "A Canadian Lourdes," the Shrine of St. Anne on the St. Lawrence, at the little village of Beaupré. The *Pall Mall* tourist saw no miracles, but he heard a lot of those who had heard of most extraordinary ones. These *coups d'états celestes* are always granted only to ignorant, out-of-the-way populations.

In a hotel the other evening the conversation turned to the subject of faith cures, magnetic healing, and the laying on of hands. One gentleman related his experience at the famous shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré, near Quebec. He vividly pictured the great array of crutches, splints, bandages, and the like, that were cast aside by the afflicted after experiencing the marvellous cures. "Why, gentlemen," said the narrator, "the blind were made to see, the halt were healed, and the paralytic threw away his wooden support." "I don't doubt it," said a gentleman present. "I was in Canada a few years ago, and witnessed the cures made by a magnetic and faith physician there. Why, the main hall of his place was filled with humps that he had prayed off the backs of hunchbacks. Each hump was labelled with the owner's residence and date."

Professor Cook, the representative of the New York State Colonisation Society in Liberia, says that, in their eagerness to prove their usefulness, many missionaries are making negro converts by the easy process of buying them at three dollars a head, and then forcing or persuading them to join the Christian Church. "If only the good work goes far enough," says Professor Cook, "we shall have regulation slave raids, towns burned, people slaughtered, and children carried away," to satisfy the demand for negro converts.

Christianity is such a civilising influence. Fifty years ago, in the United States, Christians could take any negro women they pleased and breed slaves. Now, when the negroes attempt to follow suit, they are hunted down, lynched, and burnt alive.

The pious people of America adopt much the same tactics to obtain their ends as their brethren in England. A big petition was got up in favor of Bible reading in public schools, and a large number of the signatures were of Sunday-school children, a class which, in England a dozen years or so ago, were much interested in excluding Atheists from Parliament.

The Rev. G. Moore, vicar of Cowley, is in continual hot water with his parishioners, and at the Parish Council was called over the coals for remarks made in the *Cowley Parish Magazine*. The administration of certain charities appears to be in dispute, and the Charity Commissioners are to be asked to decide the matter.

The "Irish Volunteers" enrolling in the United States, under the Clan-na-Gael, are, according to the *Progressive Thinker*, really the Pope's army, and more likely to be employed to enable the Romish Church to gain control in the States than "to free Ireland," or make a raid into Canada. Since Cleveland's message the recruiting of "Irish Volunteers" has been very active, and president Roderick J. Kennedy boasts that they can soon raise fifty regiments, though he refuses to say where the money comes from. The *Progressive Thinker* says: "The cry of Ireland is a mere blind—dishonest, treacherous; in a word, Romanist." It warns patriotic Americans to beware of the designs of Rome and her armed cohorts.

The *Progressive Thinker* says: "Not long since a convent in San Francisco was burned down, and from the basement were brought forth 700 guns—quite an object-lesson as they

lay piled up on the sidewalk. Then, again, it is reported that there are not less than 500,000 able-bodied Romanists ready for military duty in the various military auxiliary societies of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States."

The Rev. W. Osborne, of Zion Baptist Church, Chatham, is witnessing the truth of Spurgeon's text, "Resist the deacons, and they will fly at you." Dissension arose from some pulpit references. The deacons remonstrated, and the man of God applied to them the words of Isaiah (xxx. 9), "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord." The deacons say that if this had been said outside the coward's castle they would have had the law of him or punched his head; and eighty members of the congregation support them in protesting against "a wicked abuse of the pulpit." The deacons have published a statement in which they say: "We are refused all arbitration, and we know of no explanation of the charges made against us personally, nor against the Church, which has been so shamefully reviled by its minister." The next chapter in this painful quarrel is awaited with religious interest.

The Bishop of Hereford, under the pressure of public opinion, has cancelled the appointment of the Rev. Mr. Alexander to a canonry in his cathedral. The *Church Times* says: "Our sympathies entirely go with Mr. Alexander, who has had a prize withdrawn just when it appeared within his grasp. The Bishop's ignorance of Church law, however, appears to us quite characteristic."

The *Church Times* has been denouncing the bench of bishops for upholding Erastian principles on marriage, and even puts the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop King, the very High Churchman of Lincoln, into its black list.

The Ninth Correctional Tribunal of France gave judgment in the libel case brought by Mdlle. Lucie Claraz, of Fribourg, in Switzerland, against the journal, *Le Diable au Dix Neuvième Siècle*, for publishing an article in which plaintiff was described as a devil-worshipper, who procured consecrated hosts from the Catholic churches for purposes of desecration at the "Black Masses," celebrated by the votaries of Satan. The court gave judgment in favor of Mdlle. Claraz. The journal was sentenced to a fine of 100 francs, with the same amount for costs, and was ordered to insert the decision of the court in its next issue.

Principal Caird is delivering the Gifford lectures at Glasgow this year. The lectureship was intended by Lord Gifford to be open to all, including "reverent Atheists"; but the broad and flabby kind of Christian has chiefly been in evidence. The good Scotch, however, are not satisfied, because Principal Caird is delivering the lectures, which might be dangerously secular in spirit, on the Sabbath afternoon.

The *Church Times*, reviewing the Rev. A. H. Sayce's *Patriarchal Palestine*, says: "Unhappily Professor Sayce has allowed his zeal for the traditional belief in the composition of the books of the Old Testament to get the better of his discretion in at least two particular instances." One is the case of the three kings mentioned in Gen. xiv. 1, where the Professor considers a dubious reading of a tablet of circa 450 B.C. evidence that Genesis xiv. was written circa 1500. The second instance is his strained identification of Ebed Tob with the mythical Melchizedek. The *C. T.* says that *Patriarchal Palestine* bears marks of hasty writing and an uncritical readiness to accept evidence that makes for the author's preconceptions.

The Rev. W. W. Hopkins, of St. Louis, says the Church property of that city exempt from taxation is worth forty-eight millions of dollars. Fully one-half of that property, he says, is not used for Church purposes, and a large part is held under various shifts for speculation. This is pretty generally the case with the Churches throughout America. They acquire real estate during the infancy of a town, hold it without taxes, allow it to increase in value by public and private improvements, wrung by unjust legislation from the people; then they pose as the world's benefactors, while making other people pay their rightful contribution to the State.

The Rev. Madison C. Peters, pastor of the Bloomingdale Reformed Church, New York, in discussing the question, "Is New York a Christian city?" gave the following facts as reported by the *Boston Herald*: "In 1840 we had in New York one Protestant Church to every 2,071 of the population; in 1850, one to every 2,777; in 1870, one to 2,480; in 1880, one to 3,048; in 1890, one to 3,540."

The Denison (Texas) *Gazetteer* says: "The two Methodist preachers, Revs. Harmon and Wimberly, who went on a regular jamboree in Galveston last summer, during the Christian Endeavor Convention, were expelled from that

Church at the Brenham Convention. Wimberly took time by the forelock, and, cutting loose from the Methodists, joined the Baptist Church." There is nothing like taking to water after a "jamboree."

A correspondent of the *English Churchman* again makes the statement that, for the benefit of those Church of England clergymen who have a doubt as to the validity of Anglican orders—that is, doubt if the Holy Ghost properly got into Queen Elizabeth's bishops—a Church of England clergyman went on the continent and got consecrated a bishop by a consecrated bishop of the Catholic Church, and is now reconsecrating Ritualistic clergymen who have any qualms of conscience as to whether they are members of a real priesthood.

The Pope is said to be preparing another letter on the reunion of the Church—be it understood, under Papal supremacy. The heads of the Greek Church have replied very ungraciously to his last letter, speaking of "false apostles coming in the guise of sheep."

Speaking of the political junction of "Bible and Beer," the *Independent* says it protests against such an "incestuous union." The adjective implies that they are closely related.

The *Sunday Companion*, which, we understand, is issued from the same office as *Paddock Life*, tells good little children where they can find God, or, at any rate, God's name. All they have to do is to procure a good telescope and point it at the planet Mars, look for the canals in Mars, and there it is. In case it is not quite clear, they are given the word of "a student of astronomy at Washington, who is also a prominent Oriental scholar"—though a nameless one, who saw there the Hebrew word, "Shaddai," which was God's name before he was christened Jehovah. It's a pity that when God was about it he did not make it a little more intelligible.

Mr. Gladstone is by no means up to date in religious matters, or he would hardly consider an edition of the works of Bishop Butler as an adequate defence against the Scepticism of this age. Butler's works certainly stand out on the Christian side by their thought and fine feeling; but Mr. Matthew Arnold long since pointed out, in his paper on "Butler and the Zeit Geist," that the Bishop's arguments directed against the Deists of his own time do not meet the intellectual difficulties of this.

A certain steamship company in New York, in consequence of the demand for free passes and cheap rates from "ministerial-looking" men, has had the following Biblical quotations printed:—

"Thou shalt not pass."—Numbers xx. 18.

"The wicked shall no more pass."—Nahum i. 15.

"None shall ever pass."—Mark xiii. 30.

"Though they roar, yet can they not pass."—Jeremiah v. 22.

"So he paid the fare and went."—Jonah i. 3.

Applicants for free trips are, according to the *Christian World*, shown these selections, and, as a result, either give up begging or "pay the fare and go."

A Yorkshire Yarn.

Dr. Guinness Rogers tells a good story of the late Dr. Miller, at one time a very popular Congregationalist preacher. Being overtaken one night in a violent rainstorm on a Yorkshire moor, Dr. Miller accepted the hospitality of a good-hearted Yorkshireman, who equipped him with a suit of clothes while Dr. Miller's garments were drying in the kitchen. The preacher was coming downstairs after donning the borrowed clothes, when the housewife came out of another room. She had the family Bible in her hand, with the intention of inviting the doctor to read a portion from the Scriptures before retiring. Mistaking Dr. Miller in his borrowed garments for her husband, she lifted the family Bible and banged him on the head as he walked in front of her down the stairs, exclaiming: "Sithha, tak' that for askin' him to staay all t' neet!"

Formerly we were told of the soul of man, which was endowed with a separate, and almost isolated, existence. To-day we discover that what was called the soul or spirit of man is an excessively complex thing, a collection, an agglomeration of faculties, each of which requires to be studied separately. They are, of course, intimately associated; no activity can manifest itself in one without every other responding to the call. But each possesses its own life, each its own centre of activity—the organs. And, instead of being the science of the psychic faculties appertaining to the individual as a whole, psychology becomes a study of the separate functions of which the life of that individual is composed.—P. Kropotkin.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 26, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Regent-street, London, W.:—7.30, "The Sign of the Cross" (*apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play).

Tuesday, January 28, Wellington Hall, Upper-street, Islington, at 8, "The Truth About the Bible."

Wednesday, January 29, London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, Holborn Restaurant, 7.30.

Thursday, January 30, Assembly Room, Upper Edmonton, at 8, "The Truth About the Bible."

February 4, Bolton; 5, Blackburn.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 26, Edinburgh; 27, Stockton-on-Tees; 29, N.S.S. Dinner. Feb. 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 9, Camberwell; 11, Wellington Hall, Islington, London; 3 and 4, Ipswich; 16, Athenæum Hall, London; 23, Manchester. March 1, Camberwell; 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.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Your poem has merit, but evidences an inadequate command of the English language. You write English prose excellently, but to compose good verses, in any language, you must be master of its subtlest idioms.

H. W. JONES.—Glad to hear you had such a good meeting, and such a good collection, on Mr. Watts's visit. Mr. Foote is visiting Blackburn on Feb. 5, Bolton having taken Feb. 4.

T. E. M.—Will consider and advise you.

THORNTON.—The *Echo* paragraph was very absurd. Colonel Ingersoll has been interviewed by the *New York Sun* since the Christian Endeavor people prayed for him, and the interview was reprinted in our own columns. He is still unconverted, and is constantly lecturing against Christianity. Of course, his conversion would be "interesting"—from the *Echo* standpoint, but it has not yet occurred.

PARSIFAL.—Next week.

J. MICHAEL JONES.—Not exactly *left out*, but the *New Revisers* state in the margin that the second half of the last chapter of Mark is not found in the earliest manuscripts.

J. W. GOTT.—Our compliments to yourself and Mr. Grange, whom we were sorry to miss seeing on our last visit to Bradford.

T. BIRTLEY.—Next week. Glad to hear the cause is making steady progress at Chester-le-Street. Mr. Foote will not forget you towards the end of February.

R. S. HOUSE.—Pleased to know your *Conversazione* on Sunday at Camberwell was so successful.

J. M. HEADLEY.—(1) Many figures relating to Voluntary Schools have appeared in recent numbers of the *Freethinker*. Look through the "Acid Drops" for the last nine or ten weeks, and consult the references given in them. (2) The only thing we can suggest is to obtain the School balance-sheets from subscribers. (3) The "Woman's Bible" is an American publication. (4) Mr. Holyoake's book is in two volumes, price 7s.

J. F. HAMPSON.—Glad to hear Mr. Watts had good meetings at Bolton, and was never in better form. Also that you thoroughly approve the President's lecture scheme.

T. OLLERENSHAW.—Nothing unusual. It is what the sky-pilots do everywhere. The President's lecture scheme is the most successful thing in the movement. All that is wanted is more money.

J. G. WARREN.—Thanks for East London Branch's balance-sheet. Thirty-seven lectures, and the clearing off of all old liabilities, make a fair record for 1895.

T. SEARLE.—Answer next week.

J. SAUNDERSON (Jarrow) is glad to know Mr. Foote is going to write a little book on the Church of England, as such a book "is much needed."

A. WHEELER.—Much obliged, of course; but we do not intend to advertise the little conspiracy. Its only importance is the importance we might be foolish enough to give it.

W. J. LOWRIES.—Thanks for the pamphlet, etc. No doubt the subject is of much importance, but we really have not time to investigate it at present. In any case, it would not surprise us to learn that professional etiquette stood in the way of medical reform.

VIGILANT.—(1) If the Free Library refuse your free gift of this journal for the Reading Room, you can only appeal to the Committee by letter. If the Library is under the Town Council, you might subsequently try to raise the question through one of the Councillors. (2) "B. V.," the initials used by James Thomson, are the first letters of "Bysshe Vanolis." Bysshe was one of the pre-names of Shelley, and Vanolis was the anagram of Novalis, a German poet whom Thomson admired.

E. H.—(1) It was the late Bishop of Lincoln who objected to cremation because it would weaken the popular belief in the resurrection of the body. (2) We have already answered your question as to the Puritans and liberty. (3) There is an Anti-Vivisection Society in London.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks.

J. W. T.—Good in other respects, but the versification is crude.

T. H. COOPER.—Shall appear.

CHARLES DAVISS.—It was a mistake on the Chairman's part, excusable enough in the circumstances, and it was immediately corrected by the lecturer. The announcement *before* the lecture, that those who chose to go could use their tickets on the following Sunday, was quite in order. But those who stayed to hear Mr. Parris, after this notice, could hardly expect to use the same tickets again. Mr. Foote is not in a position to give them a lecture by Mr. Parris, and an hour or so at St. James's Hall—the bare rent of which is five guineas, to say nothing of other heavy expenses. This should satisfy your orthodox friends. Of course we understand *your* position in the matter.

A. P. ELVIDGE.—Will see whether we can get you the information.

LOYAL members of the Finsbury Branch of the National Secular Society, with the several new members who have recently joined, are requested to meet at the Club and Institute Union, near the Holborn Town Hall, on Monday evening (Jan. 27) at 8. Mr. Foote will attend and address the meeting. A new secretary will be appointed, and arrangements made for an active propaganda on Clerkenwell Green during the summer.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Kent and Sussex Courier—Oxford Times—Crescent—Freethought Ideal—Liberty—Truthseeker—Northern Daily Telegraph—All Saints' Weekly Gazette—Isle of Man Times—Newcastle Chronicle—Freedom—Worker's Friend—Nya Sanningar—Sunday Companion—Metaphysical Magazine—Leek Times—Monist—Blackburn Times—High Peak News—Globe—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—De Dageraad—Clarion—Islamic World.

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.

SPECIAL.

It was a miserable disappointment to me not to be able to keep my engagement at St. James's Hall last Sunday evening. I had been unwell for some days, but I kept at work, and hoped almost against hope that I should be "all right" on Sunday. I was very ill, however, on Saturday night, and the next day it was impossible to get out of bed. Happily, however, I am rapidly recovering, and there is not the slightest reason to doubt that I shall be able to lecture at St. James's Hall this evening (January 26), when I hope to face a crowded audience. Of course it may seem a little egotistical to chatter about one's health in a public journal, but I have many friends all over the country, to all of whom I cannot write, and I do not want them to be unnecessarily alarmed. It is true that no article appears from my pen in this week's *Freethinker*, but that is only because rest is necessary as well as care.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, takes place next Wednesday evening, January 29 (Thomas Paine's birthday), at the Holborn Restaurant. Mr. G. W. Foote will preside, and will be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and other well-known speakers. We also hope to see Mr. George Anderson present. Vocal and instrumental music will be provided, as usual, after the dinner, which is sure to be excellent and well served. The tickets are four shillings each, and should be obtained, if possible, by Monday morning, so that the Holborn Restaurant people may know how many to provide for.

A large audience assembled at St. James's Hall on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Sign of the Cross," *apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play. Unfortunately,

however, Mr. Foote is ill in bed with a nasty cold, which developed into a sharp bronchitis. Some strangers, who had come specially for this lecture, left the meeting with the assurance, given by Mr. A. B. Moss from the chair, that their tickets would be available on the following Sunday. The greater part of the meeting remained and listened to an instructive discourse by Mr. Touzeau Parris, who very kindly took Mr. Foote's place at a few hours' notice.

Mr. Foote is rapidly recovering, and (barring accidents) will certainly be able to fulfil his engagement at St. James's Hall this evening (January 26). He will lecture upon "The Sign of the Cross," a subject which is of immediate interest. The third lecture on Shakespeare can be included in the next course.

Mr. Foote's breakdown has necessarily entailed extra expense in connection with these St. James's Hall meetings. It is to be hoped, therefore, that his London friends will do their best to crowd the hall on this last night of the present effort.

Mr. Charles Watts had three capital audiences last Sunday in Glasgow, the largest he has had in that city for some considerable time; and they were as enthusiastic as they were large. There was a good gathering of friends from surrounding districts, and it was encouraging to see so many ladies present. After the evening lecture a unanimous vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Foote for introducing his lecturing scheme, and the Scotch friends were anxious to assure the President of the N.S.S. that he has their entire sympathy and co-operation.

Mr. Watts is lecturing all this week in Scotland under the new lecturing scheme, and next week he will give an account in our columns of his week's propaganda in breaking fresh ground.

To-day, Sunday, January 26, Mr. Watts lectures twice in Edinburgh, and to-morrow, Monday, in Stockton-on-Tees. The latter lecture will be under Mr. Foote's scheme.

Brother Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, who is an ever-reverend himself, says of the Rev. G. O. Barnes, one of the most famous of Kentucky preachers, who has some readers and admirers in this country: "If he could live about twenty-five years more, I think he would be a good infidel." Barnes admits that "about seven-eighths of all that Ingersoll said is true." Brother Moore says: "'Brother' Barnes said the God of the Old Testament was an infamous character, and he said so many other hard things against the Jew God that he almost shook my faith in religion."

The *Monist* for January opens with a most able and interesting article "On the Part Played by Accident in Invention and Discovery," by Professor Ernst Mach. The French biologist, Ribot, writes on "Pathological Pleasures and Pains"; the German biologist, Weismann, on "Germinal Selection"; and the editor gives a long dissertation on "Chinese Philosophy," with diagrams and illustrations. Dr. Carus's paper deserves study, and is one to which we shall return.

The Jubilee number of the *Daily News* reminds us that its originators were all progressive spirits, among whom the names of Dickens, Forster, Harriet Martineau, and W. J. Fox stand conspicuous. It upheld in the old days the cause of free speech, and freedom from taxes upon knowledge; but it may be doubted if it has made the stride forward that might fairly have been expected in fifty years.

Judge Emden, of Lambeth County Court, has had notices conspicuously posted in the court-room calling attention to the provisions of the Oath Act, permitting the elevation of the hand instead of kissing the greasy Bible cover. And he has instructed the officers of the court also to tell witnesses that they need not kiss the book unless they think fit. In all the cases heard since the judge's action the witnesses have availed themselves of the Act. If judges would also let witnesses know they need not swear at all, affirmations would soon become general.

The *Globe*, which is largely a lawyers' paper, says: "It seems likely that the Scottish form of swearing will become more and more popular in our courts, as medical science succeeds in convincing people that it is dangerous as well as unpleasant to kiss the uncleanly court Testament."

Mr. Joseph Collinson directs the attention of readers of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* to Mr. Foote's "strong and sensible" pamphlet, entitled *The Shadow of the Sword*.

The Swedish Freethought organ, *Nya Sanningar*, gives, in its last number, an excellent likeness and biography of Ernst

Heinrich Haeckel, the author of *The History of Creation*, etc. The other contents of the journal are varied and interesting, and Mr. Petrus Asplund is to be congratulated on the appearance of his paper.

The Paine Exhibition at Ball's Pond lasts for three days, from January 29 to 31 inclusive. The majority of the exhibits at South-place will be on view, with others, including the table Richard Carlile used when in Dorchester Gaol. Mr. Conway, Mrs. Bonner, Mr. Standring, and others, will speak each evening.

The Glasgow Branch holds its annual social meeting in commemoration of Robert Burns and Thomas Paine to-day (Sunday) at 6.30 p.m. Tickets 6d. each. There ought to be a grand gathering of Glasgow "saints."

Lord Byron's "Cain" is to be given at the Imperial Burg-theatre in Vienna, along with a fragment by Schiller, before the end of the present month. A correspondent states that some objection has been made by the clergy to a Scriptural subject of the kind appearing on the stage, even when it is taken from a classical author; but the rehearsals continue all the same.

Mr. Mayhew, the Radical candidate for the borough of Wandsworth, made a speech at the Town Hall last week, in the course of which he said he desired to see "education untrammelled by religion, religion untrammelled by the State, and the State untrammelled by the peers."

Mr. J. M. Headley is once more a candidate for the Yarmouth School Board. His program is advanced in all directions, and, as it includes Secular Education, the Yarmouth Secularists might do worse than "Plump for Headley."

Mr. A. F. Bullock, of Bath, calls our attention to the fact that a half-day excursion is run from the West of England (Bristol, Bath, etc.) to London on January 29, the return ticket being four shillings. The train leaves Bath at 2.6, and returns from Paddington at 12.40. This would enable some West of England friends to attend the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant.

Mr. J. W. Gott and Mr. John Grange, of Bradford, are visiting Todmorden to-day (Jan. 26), in order to give support and stimulus to the new Branch there. They have taken a hall and done the printing at their own risk, and we hope they will draw to Todmorden on this occasion a number of Secularists from the surrounding districts.

Ancient and Modern Methods.

The New York *Sunday News* contrasts the methods of the Church of to-day for making converts with that of two centuries ago. Discoursing on the recent attempt of the Christian endeavorers to convert Colonel Ingersoll by prayer, it says: "Two centuries or less ago Mr. Ingersoll would not have been reasoned with or appealed to. He would simply have been tortured until life was extinct in his wretched body, and would then have been roasted in a slow fire with pious deliberation. Such was the treatment universal in Christendom of all who dared doubt the established faith. In these days the thousands of good Christians who now pray for him would have looked upon his dying agonies and rejoiced and triumphed. What a wonderful change! what a glorious improvement has come upon human nature in those two centuries!"

There are those who would turn the dial of time backward, and revive that good old period when the clergy, in their secret chambers, passed upon the lives and liberties of the people, from whose cruel verdict there was no appeal. God in the constitution means a restoration of the rule of the Church.

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

"Ask, and it shall be given you."—JESUS CHRIST.

I SAW a ship upon the sea ;
Clear was the sky, and bright
The sun shone o'er the still cold deep,
With calm reflected light.

The sky was changed, and darkening clouds
Swept o'er its surface like a pall ;
The mariner looked round, and said,
"The Lord have mercy on us all."

The wind's deep sighs grew to a moan,
The billows heaved and fell ;
"There'll be a storm, there's no mistake ;
I know these signs too well."

The wind went whistling through the sails,
To rags and tatters torn ;
The good ship flew before the gale,
And laughed the waves to scorn.

She creaked, and groaned, and trembled—
The seas came bounding in :
It seemed as though the battle then
Was for the waves to win.

Some sailors swore—the children cried,
Most men and women prayed
To Him in heaven, who made them all ;
Whom winds and waves obeyed.

"Speak peace, be still, and lead us safe
To those we love, O Lord on High ;"
The answer came : the thunder pealed,
And lightning flashed across the sky.

"O Lord, who art so merciful,
Look down upon us from thy throne ;
Our children need us for their bread :
Save us !—"Thy will be done."

His will was done, and on the rocks
The good ship foundered in the night
And mangled bodies lined the shore,
To please his gentle sight.

And starving orphan children,
And widows wan and pale,
Will tell how prayers are answered
When God has made a gale.

H. C. S.

When ?

When have Infidels founded Inquisitions to torture men into belief ?

When has Infidelity afflicted mankind with twelve centuries of woe, most fitly described as "The Dark Ages" ?

When has Infidelity carried on religious wars like the "Crusades" ?

When has Infidelity slaughtered fifty million people as the Mother Church has ?

When have Infidels murdered the teachers of our race, as Christianity did Hypatia, Bruno, Vanini, Servetus, and many others ?

When have Infidels vented their spite upon the dead by digging up and burning their bodies ?

When have Infidels begun, on St. Bartholomew's Day, and massacred seventy thousand of their fellow-men in one week ?

When have Infidels persecuted the Jews ?

When have Infidels sold "Indulgences" ?

When have Infidels set up the worship of bones, hairs, rusty nails, "wood from the true cross," and other relics ?

When have Infidels burned holes in Quakers' tongues, and dragged old, bedridden women from their couches, and hung them as witches on the evidence of little children ?

When have Infidels opposed comforts and refinements, such as the introduction of stoves, carpets, chandeliers, violins, and organs into churches ?

When has any Freethinker ever characterised fire, marine, and life insurance, and the setting up of lightning rods, as "challenges to God Almighty" ?

When have Infidels decried the use of anæsthetics in obstetrical cases as "an impious attempt to escape the curse" denounced against all women in Genesis iii. 16 ?

Tommy—"Paw, what does the paper mean by practical Christianity ?" Paw—"Practical Christianity is the kind that does not interfere with a man's business."

Strauss.

The *Echo* (January 14) says : "The six hundred letters of David Friedrich Strauss, written to divers friends, which have been collected by one of them, Herr Eduard Zeller, the well-known historian of Greek philosophy, into a volume, *Ausgewählte Briefe*, published at Bonn, show that Strauss may be classed among great letter writers ; but they do not reveal anything more of the man than is to be found in his works. His life was in his brain, and his thought took definite shape early in his life. At thirty he had fulfilled his destiny, finished his task. He was hardly twenty-seven when he published his *Life of Jesus*, and a few years later he sent forth another work as remarkable—a history of dogma—in which he shows how dogmas are born, grow, and die. Strauss was a dialectician. He had the genius of analysis. Faith in his hands is reduced to grey ashes at the bottom of a crucible and a wreath of thin smoke above. He used to say it was Plato who introduced belief in eternal life to the West. The philosopher who dared to put men face to face with Death without disguising him was Epicurus, and Strauss preferred the last chapter of the history of Atticus, by Cornelius Nepos, to the Phædo. His mind was as clear as crystal, but it was cold as ice. From his youth he believed that man was all reason. He never discovered the knowledge that comes through love. But he showed in death, as in life, that the pillow of the doubter may be as soft as that of the believer."

Buddhism.

The Buddhists number 400,000,000, or one-third of the human race.

Buddha lived about 600 to 700 years before our era. Buddhists do not believe in any god or gods as being pleased or displeased by the actions, and as assigning the actors their future condition by way of punishment or reward.

The very idea of a God as creating, or in any way ruling, the world is utterly absurd in the Buddhist system.

God is not so much as denied, he is simply not known.

Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of Atheists never existed, it is no longer to be disputed that the numerous Buddhist nations are essentially Atheist, for they know no beings with greater supernatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, austerity, and science ; and a remarkable indication of this startling fact is to be seen in the circumstance that some at least of the Buddhist nations—the Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans—have no word in their languages to express the notion of God.

The future condition of the Buddhist, then, is not assigned him by the Ruler of the universe ; but his actions determine it by a sort of virtue inherent in the nature of things, by the blind and unconscious concatenation of cause and effect.

—*Chambers's Encyclopædia* ; article, "Buddhism."

A Premium on Sin.

Sin is defined as a violation of a law of God. Any act in disregard of his will is a sin. The offence has been divided into venial and deadly ; but all sins, whether trifling or mortal, are offences which alienate the transgressor from the favors of high heaven, and subject him, according to orthodox teaching, to endless woe. But, however hardened the sinner, numerous his crimes, or malignant the offence, he is told : "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins ; not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (see 1 John i. 1, 2).

From this it seems the Son of God, the very Father himself, lately incarnated in flesh, becomes an attorney for the vile sinner, and, more, offers himself as an atonement for the offender's guilt.

Sin is represented as pleasurable. How often we hear from the pulpit : "He rolled the sweet morsel of sin under his tongue." When death stares the guilty wretch in the face, and he sees the end near, like the dying thief on the cross he believes, and hears the glad announcement : "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Paddy was making his escape with a stolen pig. The owner, catching a sight of the rascal in his flight, shouted : "You will go to hell for that."

"And, faith," Pat replied, "I'll take the whole brood on those terms."

Pat knew his salvation was assured ; for he had divine authority that Jesus will be a propitiation, an atonement, for him, and will be a special advocate in his behalf when reckoning day comes. Paddy's case is identical with that of the whole Christian world, and explains why the penitentiaries are overflowing with "the ransomed of the Lord."

—*Progressive Thinker*.

BOOK CHAT.

AN American publisher announces the forthcoming appearance of Hall Caine's *Life of Christ* this summer. This is a surprise, for the author has long and persistently refused to consent to its issuance. The life was written twenty-six years ago, with the idea of having a story of Christ as vivid and personal from the point of belief as Renan's is from the point of unbelief. But Mr. Caine was not satisfied with his work, and refused to let it be printed, though in 1894 one firm tendered him £3,000 for the copyright.

It is announced that the widow of "Stepniak" will publish a biography of her husband. It will doubtless contain many interesting and stirring incidents which will be new to the public.

The Primitive Hebrew Records in the Light of Modern Research, by W. St. Chad Boscawen, is issued by Eyre and Spottiswoode; price 5s. This work is a detailed textual comparison of the Hebrew and Babylonian legends of the Creation and the Flood, and as such will be of considerable value to the student. Smith's *Chaldean Genesis* is now more or less out of date, and the present volume aims at giving the latest information upon the subject. We might observe, however, that in a work of this class the Babylonian epic poem of the Creation, discovered by Mr. George Smith, ought to have been translated in full; and we are somewhat surprised to see the unplaceable so-called "Legend of Kutha" put forward as a Creation legend. The writer professes to have in view the establishment of "the authenticity and faithfulness of the Hebrew records," whatever that may mean. But, as he clearly shows that the Hebrew stories were originated by the heathen Babylonians, the question of their "authenticity" is not important. The work contains several good photographs which have nothing to do with the text, and would have been much more valuable with a good index.

Hebrew Unveiled: Some Affinities of the Hebrew Language, by Arthur Hall (Asher & Co.; 1s.), is a brochure in confirmation of the views of McCurdy and others, that early Aryan and early Semitic speech were allied. In the good old days, when everything was supposed to come by revelation, Hebrew was held to have been the language spoken by God to Adam, and by the Devil to Eve, in Paradise. All other languages were to be traced to it, or to the confusion of tongues at Babel. This view has long been relegated by philologists to the limbo of exploded errors. Mr. Hall frankly says as much. None the less, he does show considerable affinities between Hebrew and the Indo-European languages, which, at any rate, until Hebrew is definitely traced to its earliest forms, seems to us possible to be accounted for by borrowing on both sides. The Jews, like the Phœnicians before them and the English now, were a travelling and commercial people, who gathered up and also distributed language as well as other commodities. What is called Rabbinical Hebrew and Chaldean shows this process in ancient times. Yiddish, at first a colloquial jargon of Hebrew, German, Polish, Russian, and English, but which is gradually taking literary shape in newspapers and books, illustrates the process in our own day. Probably Hebrew is easiest "unveiled" by studying it from this end, where affinities are most certain.

The Life of Cardinal Manning, by E. S. Purcell, is a very one-sided biography, but it helps to show the influences that made one of the most intense and narrow ecclesiastics of his day. He said that when he was four a cousin "told me that God had a book in which he wrote down everything we did wrong. This so terrified me for days that I remember being found by my mother sitting under a writing-table, in great fear. I never forgot this at any time of my life, and it has been a great grace to me, and kept me from the greatest dangers." He thus prided himself upon retaining the most puerile superstitions. His first recollections of school included "trying to think what there was before the world was made"; but, instead of seeing the barrenness of such questions, he satisfied himself with the stereotyped answers of orthodoxy.

Manning told the following story: "As a boy at Combe Bank, Christopher Wordsworth, late Bishop of Lincoln, and Charles Wordsworth, late Bishop of St. Andrew's, were my playmates. I frankly admit I was very mischievous. The two Wordsworths and I conceived the wicked intention of robbing the vinery. The door was always kept locked, and there was nothing for it but to enter through the roof. There was a dinner party that day, and there were no grapes. This is probably the only case on record where three future bishops were guilty of larceny. Were we punished? No, we were discreet. We gave ourselves up, and were forgiven." These and other bishops might be

forgiven, were such larceny the worst crimes of which they have been guilty.

Mr. Purcell, who is of course a good Catholic, tells us how Manning, with the leading men of the High Church, were in 1838 actively engaged in resisting the attempts of the State in favor of a national system of education. The future cardinal went about preaching against this effort of Liberalism, and the matter was deferred till 1870. Mr. Purcell adds: "Against the godless system of education Manning from first to last was the most consistent and uncompromising opponent."

Manning, disappointed of hopes of preferment in the Church of England, went over to Rome after a long and serious illness. "How can I ever bless God for this sickness," he wrote; "without it I should have died eternally." So that, had not sickness brought him to Rome, he believed he would have been damned, despite his previous opposition to State education. It appears that Manning's appointment as archbishop was not popular at first with his co-religionists, and there was a good deal of friction between Manning and Newman. Manning went in for the whole hog, including the bristles, of infallibility.

A mutual friend, an amateur in photography, had made a very unflattering presentment of Manning. "Do I look so cunning?" was his surprised comment. A story he never shrank from telling was of a sculptor who had once attempted his bust in Rome. During one of the sittings, as he was discoursing of phrenology, Manning made him point out on the head he was modelling the supposed seat of various organs and qualities. At last Manning had asked him where was the seat of conscience, upon which the sculptor had stalked across the room, and, touching a certain part of the sitter's head, remarked: "That's where it ought to be."

The Gospels as Historical Records, published by Williams and Norgate, is, according to Mr. Voysey, who has recently given a discourse upon it, to be compared to *Supernatural Religion*.

Messrs. Smith and Elder issue a new edition of Mr. Ernest Hart's *Hypnotism, Mesmerism, and the New Witchcraft*. In its revised form the work will contain additional chapters on "The Eternal Gullible," and a note on "The Hypnotism of Trilby."

Professor C. H. Cornill, of Königsberg, who is vouched for by the editor of the *Open Court* as an orthodox Christian, says in his work on *The Prophets of Israel*: "We know absolutely nothing about Moses. All original records are missing; we have not received a line, not even a word, from Moses himself, or from any of his contemporaries; even the celebrated Ten Commandments are not from him, but, as can be proved, were written in the first half of the seventh century, between 700 and 650 B.C. The oldest accounts we have of Moses are 500 years later than his time."

If Zola's representation of the cardinals and their *entourage* in *Rome* is at all correct—and he is a man who has kept his eyes open—we should think that a single frank, brave Free-thinker of any nationality should be able to defeat all their wily machinations. The Catholic Church appears to be a good deal like the Bourbons; it learns nothing and forgets nothing. True, it has to move with the motion of the earth, but it is manacled beyond deliverance by the dead weight of its own past. A liberal and enlightened Papacy, such as dreamt of by the abbé Pierre Froment, would be an anomaly. It cannot forget its temporal power, and it is always plotting to undo the work of September, 1870.

Sham Liberal Catholics, like St. George Mivart and W. S. Lilly, are looked on with suspicion at the Vatican, and the former soon got his knuckles rapped when he ventured to write on "Happiness in Hell." The true Vatican feeling seems represented in Zola's Cardinal Bocconera, who says that, even if its enemies are right, and Catholicism has to die, it should expire in its integrality without making any concessions or modifications. "*On ne sauve pas les vieilles maisons, dans lesquelles on met la pioche, sous prétexte de les réparer. On ne fait qu'augmenter les lézards.*" ("One does not save old houses by digging at them under pretence of repairing them. One only increases the crevices.")

In sober truth, whatever homage may be professed, or even paid, to real or supposed mental superiority, the general tendency of things throughout the world is to render mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind.—*John Stuart Mill.*

"God Bless our Home!"

In a remote country district a lady, locally described as "one of the boarders," chanced to call at a most unpretentious farmhouse. On the parlor wall, hanging in most conspicuous place, she saw the announcement:—

"ICI ON PARLE FRANCAIS."

She was surprised, and no doubt her face betrayed her feelings. Why should French be spoken in this out-of-the-way place? And, if spoken, why should the fact be published?

The old farmer came to her relief.

"Waal, yes, most folks looks kinder befuzzled at that," he said. "Sometimes they stares at it, an' don't dasset ask no questions. Mother bought it of a man that brought things round to the door to sell—not ezzactly a peddler—kind of a book agent he called hisself. And as soon's mother set her eyes on it, and the agent told her what the words was, nothin' would do but she must hev it. She's kinder pious, mother is."

As the visitor's mystification was only increased, the old gentleman went on, a twinkle in his eye: "Ah, I see you can't read 'em nuther. Neaw, I thought you city folks knowed furrin words. Waal, I'll tell yer. Them words jest means, 'God bless our home.' That's what the agent said. Neaw, yer wouldn't 'a' thought it, would yer? And I dunno myself, but it's kinder brought a blessin'. Mother says it he's."

A Godless Town.

The good people of Wapella County have engaged Dwight L. Moody and two other evangelists to convert the inhabitants of Eddyville to Christianity, reports a correspondent at Ottumwa, Iowa, U.S.A. It is said they do not believe in the existence of God or hell, decline to take an oath or attend a church service. Evangelists have invaded the town and labored for weeks without gaining a single convert; but when Robert G. Ingersoll lectures the entire male population turn out, laying aside everything else to hear the famous speaker. City officers-elect have been known to refuse to take the ordinary oath of office because it contains the sentence, "so help me God." At present fully two-thirds of the business men of the town are unbelievers. Eddyville has a population of 1,500. Last summer Billy Sunday, the evangelist, held a series of meetings there, lasting an entire week, and he failed to get a single convert. He remarked that he had never before preached in a town with so little success. Major Broderick, foreman of the Wapella County Grand Jury, adjourned that body the other day in order that he might hear Ingersoll lecture.

Renan's Library.

Madame Calmann Levy, widow of the publisher, has come to an arrangement with M. Ary Renan and Madame Psichari with a view to purchasing the bulk of the library of their father, which she intends to present to the public. The Renan family, says the *Daily Telegraph* Paris correspondent, had received offers from Boston, Chicago, and Frankfort; but it is now definitely arranged that the books are to go to the National Library, the Government having accepted Madame Calmann Levy's offer. The manuscripts and printed works annotated by Ernest Renan have already, in accordance with the terms of his will, been deposited in the National Library, and in a few weeks, or even days, the remainder of his books, with a few exceptions, will be at the service of the public. The exceptions are the books presented to Renan by his contemporaries. These will remain in the keeping of his family. The library purchased by Madame Calmann Levy consists of 5,516 volumes. The catalogue is divided into two parts, the first comprising the Oriental and Biblical tomes. They deal with Eastern antiquities, the origin of Christianity, Northern Africa, Islam, India, Central Asia, the extreme West, and the classics. In the second part are volumes relating to general history and philology, philosophy, politics, literature, and science. M. Ary Renan, the artist, says that his father was passionately fond of these books, among which he moved daily. He filled his apartments with them, and when he lived in the Rue Vaneau he annexed six servants' rooms on the top story of the house to his own flat, so that he could have space to arrange and classify his numerous volumes.

I believe that the man [killed by lightning] and the gnat [killed by a swallow] are in the same predicament. If the death of neither man nor gnat is designed, I see no good reason to believe that their first birth or production should be necessarily designed.—*Darwin*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HEAVENLY INCENDIARISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You will perhaps kindly inform me if there are any Fire Insurance Offices in heaven, as I am not quite certain, but rather inclined to think there are, judging from what often takes place here on earth, as we frequently read of persons, who are heavily insured, setting their own houses on fire, and, when detected, not only forfeit the Insurance premium, but are sometimes punished for endangering other people's property. We also often read of God Almighty destroying his own houses with lightning. Now, Sir, I cannot conceive what object he has in view, unless it be that these doomed churches are insured in heaven. If you cannot give a definite reply, you will perhaps kindly consult your Old Friend, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who is, I presume, well versed in heavenly matters.

T. DUNBAR HARRIS.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PRISON REFORM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In view of the acknowledged need of reform in our Criminal Law and Prison System, the Humanitarian League is starting a special department to deal with that subject. The organising secretary is Mrs. C. Mallet, to whom communications should be addressed at 132 Cromwell-road, London, S.W. The help of all sympathisers is invited, and any contributions received will be devoted wholly to this branch of the League's work. Mrs. Mallet is prepared to give a lantern lecture on the Prison System before any Club or Institute that may desire it. H. S. SALT, Hon. Sec.

PROFANE JOKES.

In the world's great field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
You will find the Christian soldier
Represented by his wife.

"Allers seems to me," said the grocery oracle, "that after ole Jim Bilwallop hez put in Sunday tellin' the Lord that he is the orneryest ole cuss on earth he puts in the rest of the week tryin' to see if he can live up to it."

"I don't know as I dare say yes," she said, in response to his proposal; "clergymen's sons, you know, are proverbially bad." "Yes," he replied, with eagerness, "but then my father isn't much of a clergyman."

A well-known German-American citizen of Harmony Garden, a suburb of Atchison, often talks to his dog. Last week he was overheard to thus address the animal: "Mein tog, there is a great difference from you und me. Now, ven I gets up in the morning I has to vash mineself und dress mineself und bring in der kindling before I can get a bit of breakfast. But it's different mit you. Youst as soon as you git up all you has to do is to stretch, und den somebody gifts you a breakfast. Vell, you play all tay, but I have to vork, vork all der vile; you youst haf fun. Vell, the time vill come already ven you haf to die, und den, mine tog, dat is all of you; but it is different mit me, I haf to go to hell yet."

The Scotch clergy are not quite the little god almighties they were once considered to be. The *Baillie*, of Glasgow, thus comments on one of these good men, who doubtless considered he was only doing his duty: "In a certain Free Kirk in one of our southern suburbs there was a 'magic-lantern' entertainment, in which the juveniles of the district took a natural interest, intent on nothing more than a little enjoyment. Among those who attended was a boy of about ten years, who, although his father is a 'heretic,' was allowed to join a few of his playmates at the entertainment. At the close of the latter the boy was requested to 'remain behind,' which he did, very much 'down in the mouth,' as his companions, whose parents, I suppose, were regular hearers, were allowed to run away and play themselves. Left alone with his inquisitor, the boy had a sad time of it. He was asked 'if he was saved,' or something to that effect. The reply not being apparently satisfactory, he was told that if he wanted to be a good boy he must not play at football or cricket, or any such 'sinful games,' but set his mind on higher things! He was then 'dismissed with a blessing.' No wonder the boy went back to his mother in tears. These being noticed, he was questioned, and told the above story. Can cases of this kind, your Honor, not be treated under the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children?"

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 Sign of the Cross" (apropos of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play).
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, H. Snell, "Life of Bradlaugh" (with limelight illustrations). Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, at 6, Paine Exhibition.
BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, musical and dramatic entertainment. Tuesday, at 8.30, dancing.
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Roman-road): 3, Sunday-school; 7, annual general meeting.
EDMONTON (Assembly Rooms): Wednesday, at 8, G. W. Foote, "The Truth about the Bible."
FINSBURY (Club and Institute, Clerkenwell-road): Monday, at 8, meeting of members of N.S.S.
ISLINGTON (Wellington Hall, Almeida-street): Tuesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "The Truth about the Bible."
PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "I thy God am a Jealous God."
WEST HAM SECULAR SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Henry McNiel, "Bimetallism; or, Justice between Man and Man."
WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stewart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, meeting of members and friends.

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, W. H. Whitney, "An Hour with Ingersoll."
BLACKBURN (Venetian Hall, Darwin-street): Thursday and Friday, at 7.30, C. Cohen will lecture. Wednesday, a social party at the Spinners' Institute, St. Peter-street.
BRADFORD (Unity Lodge Room, 33 Sunbridge-road): Monday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity: Is it True?"
BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, W. Matthews, "Robert Burns."
CARLTON (Board Schools): Monday, at 7.30, J. Hooper, "Humanity's Gain from Unbelief."
EDINBURGH (Labor Hall, 50 South Bridge): 2.30, Charles Watts, "The Perplexities of Christianity"; 6.30, "The Religious Man."
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Cassells, "Social Reforms, Ideals, and Methods"; 6.30, Burns and Paine soiree.
HUDDERSFIELD (Friendly and Trade Societies' Large Hall): Tuesday, ball, supper, and entertainment.
HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Hilditch, "Historical Christianity: a Reply to Mr. Hendy."
IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, members' meeting.
KEIGHLEY (Co-operative Hall): Tuesday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christ's Teachings Inadequate and Anti-Social."
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, Touzeau Parris, "What is Truth"; 6.30, "Sin Against God an Impossibility."
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Ernest Newman, "Life in Ancient Greece."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Voltaire"; 3, "Christianity and Medical Science"; 6.30, "Freethought and Morals."
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 3, monthly meeting—urgent business; 7, Mr. Clair, "The Sign of the Cross."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3 and 7, select entertainments; collections for hospitals. Wednesday, at 5.30, tea, soiree, and ball (for members and friends) in honor of Thomas Paine's birthday.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, J. Henri, "Ancient Architecture."
TODMORDEN (Sobriety Hall): 3, John Grange, "Education: True and False"; 7, "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better for Man?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—January 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.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 1, Balls Pond.

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

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 6s.

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