

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

COERCING GREECE.

IN the *Freethinker* for February 28 I wrote an article on "The Crescent and the Cross in Crete," in which I showed the absurdity of the orthodox English notion that the Mohammedans mixed up in what is called the Eastern Question are incarnate devils, while the Christians are sweet, innocent creatures, the helpless victims of cruel tyrants and bloodthirsty fanatics. I showed by an appeal to the highest authority—namely, that of Finlay the historian, that during the Greek Revolution, seventy years ago, the Christian Greeks were more fiendishly brutal than the Mohammedan Turks. I also said that if the strife in Crete were not stopped, the whole of the Mohammedan population in the island would be massacred. This is an aspect of the matter which does not trouble the clerical gentlemen (mostly Nonconformists) who have dropped the Armenian question only in order to make fresh capital out of the more burning question of Crete. It is one, however, that should not be lost sight of by Freethinkers, who know that religious fanaticism is the same evil thing, whatever banner floats above its forces. Tuesday's papers contained the following item of news from Canea:—

"The hospital here contains many Moslem women and children from Sitia who have been mutilated by the Christians. Some peculiarly horrible atrocities have been committed by the insurgents, and massacres are not uncommon. Of the 167 Turkish inhabitants of the village of Cykia only one child, named Ahmed, has escaped the slaughter."

Wednesday's papers confirmed this intelligence, and even strengthened it. I take the following paragraph from the *Daily News*:—

"The massacre of Mussulmans at Sitia, which was at first denied, has now been confirmed, and the Mussulmans demand the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the affair. The foreign Consuls at Candia have established the truth of the report by means of witnesses, and the presentation of a list of 400 persons killed at the villages of Daphne, Ahladia, Zivo, and Episcopi. At Zivo 66 men, 52 women, and 41 children perished, besides several victims who were not identified, their bodies, it is alleged, having been burnt immediately after the massacre. The number of those killed at the village of Canioni is not known. Of the Turks who had taken refuge at Candia nine were wounded, one being a child of four, suffering from a sword-cut, and one a little girl, who had her ears cut off. The others included several women, who had received wounds from firearms and other weapons."

Now if these Christians had captured a Turkish garrison, and put every man to the sword, one might have said that, however regrettable, it was only a natural outburst of vengeful feeling. But when helpless women and poor little children are murdered and mutilated, one's gorge rises against the vile assassins, and one is led to doubt whether these Christians of Crete are really worth all the trouble that is being taken on their behalf.

Not a word about these Christian outrages is said, or will be said, by English Nonconformists. They have their own game to play, and they are playing it with their usual hypocrisy. It would not disturb their sleep for a single night if a million Mohammedans were slaughtered. All their sympathy is reserved for their co-religionists. "To me, as a Christian," Sir Walter Phillimore said at the St. Martin's Hall indignation meeting—"To me, as a Christian, the sufferings of Christians appeal more forcibly

than the sufferings of non-Christians." Yes, and the wickedness of Christians strikes him less forcibly than the wickedness of non-Christians.

At the close of my article—after expressing satisfaction at the action of Greece, as forcing the hands of the Powers; and recording the opinion that the people of this country would never tolerate the spectacle of England helping to coerce Greece in the interests of Turkey—I wrote as follows: "At the same time, we should not go into hysterics over 'freedom,' as though it sanctioned every folly and crime. Greece has done a brave thing in going to Crete, but she is calculating on the great Powers holding Turkey in check. Now, if the Powers hold back Turkey, they are justified in putting pressure upon Greece."

I still hold to every word of that declaration. It seems to me to sum up the common sense of the situation. Those who want England to retire from the European Concert, overlook the fact that Turkey is being held back by the Powers. We cannot act with the Concert in one thing, and refuse to act with it in another. We must stay or withdraw. There is no middle course. If we stay, we must do the best we can in the circumstances. If we withdraw, we do not necessarily break up the Concert, and we deprive Greece of her one sure and powerful friend. Every friend of Greece should wish the concert to be maintained, with England in it, and using her influence as far as possible in the interest of freedom and justice as well as of peace.

Greece really owes her own independence as a kingdom to the Powers. Where would she have been, seventy years ago, but for the aid of Russia, France, and England? Where would she be now if the Powers observed absolute neutrality, and let her fight it out with Turkey? Greece has a little over two million people; Turkey has forty millions. Does any man in his senses think that little Greece could hold her own against two hundred thousand of such troops as made the siege of Plevna one of the great episodes in military history?

"Whatever else happens," I wrote, "it is most unlikely that Crete will revert to Turkey. The island may be guaranteed its autonomy, but that will only be the first step towards union with Greece." Since then the Powers have told the Sultan that he must clear out of Crete, that the island must have autonomy, and that the settlement must take place under the supervision of the Powers themselves.

What more can be expected at the present moment? Greece has only to wait, and her ambition will be satisfied. Meanwhile, she should come to terms with the Powers, who, on their side, should do their best to soothe her susceptibilities. Flying in the face of the Powers is absurd. If they coerce Turkey, they have just the same right to put pressure upon Greece.

It is said that the European Concert is a concert of cowardice. Well, in one sense it is, and we ought to be glad of the fact. The arts of destruction are now so terrible that every government dreads war. This is a new factor in human affairs. Great events never spring from purely altruistic motives. There is self-love on both sides, even in the Arbitration Treaty between England and the United States. Let us be thankful for a good thing, however mixed are the motives which contribute to its existence. After all, the European Concert may be but the beginning of the United States of Europe. Certainly it is to some extent a guarantee of peace—the most vital interest of civilization.

G. W. FOOTE.

HERBERT SPENCER'S LAST VOLUME.*

THE completion of *A System of Synthetic Philosophy*, in ten volumes, is a great achievement. To not many philosophers has it been given to so far fulfil their task as Mr. Spencer has done. Of course, he sees heights beyond him, and he tells us in his preface that he had intended to have treated of Progress—Linguistic, Intellectual, Moral, Æsthetic. But, obviously, for an invalid of seventy-six to deal adequately with topics so extensive and complex is impossible. Mr. Spencer remarks that, in looking back over the six-and-thirty years which have passed since his work was commenced, he is surprised at his audacity in undertaking it, and still more by its completion. He records the many discouragements which attended its early years:—

"How insane my project must have seemed to on-lookers may be judged from the fact that before the first chapter of the first volume was finished one of my nervous breakdowns obliged me to desist. But imprudent courses do not always fail. Sometimes a forlorn hope is justified by the event. Though, along with other deterrents, many relapses, now lasting for weeks, now for months, and once for years, often made me despair of reaching the end, yet at length the end is reached. Doubtless, in earlier days, some exultation would have resulted; but, as age creeps on, feelings weaken, and now my chief pleasure is in my emancipation. Still, there is satisfaction in the consciousness that losses, and discouragements, and shattered health have not prevented me from fulfilling the purpose of my life."

The concluding volume of *The Principles of Sociology* is devoted to the evolution of Ecclesiastical, Professional, and Industrial Institutions. The first-named, which mainly concern us here, was originally published a dozen years ago; the second appeared in the shape of review articles; the third is new. In his "Ecclesiastical Institutions" Mr. Spencer traces their development from the time when the savage believer in dreams and ghosts sought to please or propitiate the latter, who, in Mr. Spencer's view, are the earliest gods. From ancestor worship Mr. Spencer derives the whole paraphernalia of religion. The only distinction drawn between the medicine-man and the priest is that, whereas the former seeks to frighten away the spirits, the latter tries to cajole them. But, says Mr. Spencer,

"Though the one is a driver away of spirits rather than a propitiator of them, while the other treats them as friends rather than enemies, yet either occasionally adopts the policy of the other. The priest sometimes plays the part of exorcisor, and the medicine-man endeavors to appease.....Among the Ostyaks the Shamans, who are medicine-men, are also 'intermediators between the people and their gods.' The business of a Gond medicine-man is 'to exorcise evil spirits, to interpret the wishes of the fetish, to compel rain, and so on'" (p. 64).

Incidentally Mr. Spencer shows that "the plasma of superstitions, amid which the religion of the Hebrews evolves, was of the same nature with that found everywhere." Jahveh was originally but one God among the many—"a local potentate," like those who even now are called gods by the Bedouins:—

"Along with the limitations of Jahveh's authority in range went limitations of it in degree. There was no claim to omnipotence. Not forgetting the alleged failure of his attempt personally to slay Moses, we may pass on to the defeats of the Israelites when they fought by his advice, as in two battles with the Benjaminites, and as in the battle with the Philistines, when 'the ark of God was taken' (1 Samuel iv. 3-10). And then, beyond this, there is the specific statement that, when helping Judah, the Lord 'could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron' (Judges i. 19). That is, there were incapacities equalling those attributed by other peoples to their gods. Similarly with intellectual and moral nature. Jahveh receives information; he goes to see whether reports are true; he repents of what he has done—all implying anything but omniscience. Like Egyptian and Assyrian kings, he continually lauds himself; and while saying, 'I will not give my glory to another' (Isaiah xlvi. 11), he describes himself as jealous, as revengeful, and as a merciless destroyer of enemies. He sends a lying spirit to mislead a king, as Zeus does

to Agamemnon (2 Chronicles xviii. 20-22). By his own account he will deceive a prophet that he may prophesy falsely, intending then to destroy him (Ezekiel xiv. 9); he hardens men's hearts that he may inflict evils on them for what they then do; and, as when he prompts David to number Israel, suggests a supposed sin that he may afterwards punish those who have not committed it. He acts as did the Greek gods, from whom bad impulses were supposed to come, and who were similarly indiscriminate in their revenges" (p. 30).

Writing on the "Military Functions of Priests," Mr. Spencer says (§ 628):—

"Among the many errors which result from carrying back advanced ideas and sentiments to the interpretation of primitive institutions, few are greater than that of associating priestly functions with actions classed as high in kind, and dissociating them from brutal and savage actions. Did not men's prepossessions render them impervious to evidence, even their Bible readings might raise doubts; and wider readings would prove that among mankind at large priests have displayed and cultivated, not the higher, but rather the lower, passions of humanity" (p. 107).

He points out that the ark of the Jews, regarded as the dwelling of Jahveh, was taken out to war, and "while king and people were in some cases inclined to show clemency, priests insisted upon *cherem*—merciless, indiscriminate slaughter; and Samuel 'cried unto the Lord all night' because Saul, who had 'utterly destroyed' the Amalekites, had not killed their king and all their cattle: reminding us of the Fijian who, not having done his utmost in slaying, worked himself into a 'religious frenzy,' calling out continually, 'The God is angry with me'" (p. 109).

Samuel, the typical Hebrew priest, is pointed out as judge and weather-doctor in one. In his concluding chapters of this section Mr. Spencer indicates how the priest tends to evolve from the medicine man to the moral teacher.

In his "Professional Institutions" Mr. Spencer traces the evolution of the principal professions from the ideas and customs attendant on savagery. The following passages in elucidation of the original connection between the priest and the medicine-man are notable:—

"In the minds of multitudinous living people there exists the notion that epidemics are results of divine displeasure; and no less in the verdict, 'Died by the visitation of God,' than in the vague idea that recovery from, or fatal issue of, a disease, is in part supernaturally determined, do we see that the ancient theory lingers. Moreover, there is a pre-determination to preserve it. When, some years ago, it was proposed to divide hospital patients into two groups, for one of which prayers were offered, and for the other not, the proposal was resented with indignation. There was a resolution to maintain the faith in the curative effect of prayer, whether it was or was not justified by the facts; to which end it was felt desirable not to bring it face to face with the facts" (p. 193).

"Again, down to the present day epilepsy is regarded by many as due to possession by a devil, and Roman Catholics have a form of exorcism to be gone through by a priest to cure maladies thus supernaturally caused. Belief in the demoniacal origin of some diseases is, indeed, a belief necessarily accepted by consistent members of the Christian Church, since it is the belief taught to them in the New Testament—a belief, moreover, which survives the so-called highest culture. When, for example, we see a late Prime Minister, deeply imbued with the university spirit, publicly defending the story that certain expelled devils entered into swine, we are clearly shown that the theory of the demoniacal origin of some disorders is quite consistent with the current creed" (p. 194).

The account of the evolution of industrial institutions is at once the newest and the most important portion of the volume. Its study is not only desirable, but almost indispensable to those who wish to be abreast of the problems of society at the present day. Mr. Spencer, as it is well known, has no belief in governmental Socialism, but he believes in co-operation, and he concludes the whole volume by repeating his belief "expressed nearly fifty years ago," that "the ultimate man will be one whose private requirements coincide with public ones. He will be that manner of man who, in spontaneously fulfilling his own nature, incidentally performs the functions of a social unit, and yet is only enabled so to fulfil his own nature by all others doing the like." I cannot conclude my hasty

* *The Principles of Sociology*, vol. iii. (Williams and Norgate.)

sketch of this concluding volume of *The Principles of Sociology* without recording my satisfaction that a work so splendidly conceived should have been carried forward to completion.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE CHURCH PARTY IN POWER.

No facts stand out more prominently in the history of this country than the opposition manifested by the Church of England to the legitimate rights and demands of the people, and the direful effects that have, as a rule, followed the attainment of increased power by the Church of Rome. In fact, so far as their unjust treatment of the rightful liberties of the masses is concerned, there is but little difference, if any, between the two Churches. They have each done their best, whenever they had the opportunity, to resist the advancement of political and social reform. Protestants are never slow to attack Roman Catholics, but nothing would be more easy than to present a terrible indictment against the English Establishment for its persistent obstruction to the requirements of modern thought.

If the reader should doubt the accuracy of the allegation here made, it is only necessary for him to read the history of the struggles associated with such questions as education, the extension of the franchise, and the laws affecting labor. Towards each of these most important subjects the Church of England has either evinced an utter indifference, or it has offered the most determined antagonism. For centuries the working classes relied upon the clergy for aid which they never gave. Ultimately the people resolved to rely upon themselves, to fight their own battles, and to secure, if possible, their own emancipation; and, so far as they have succeeded in their laudable object, they are indebted to no Church, but to their own undaunted efforts. J. R. Green, M.A., in his *Short History of the English People*, says that the Protestants, as far back as 1625, "turned religion into a systematic attack on English liberty" (p. 489). And to-day is not our Parliament composed of a large majority of members and friends of the Church of England? By Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister, and by his two sons, Lord Cranborne and Lord Hugh Cecil, surrounded as they are by a host of "blind leaders of the blind," everything is being done in favor of the theological demands, and in support of the Church and its antiquated privileges. The Church party in Parliament are evidently resolved to do their very best (or worst) to obstruct every movement which has for its object the establishment of equal rights among the general community.

This fact was made quite clear in the proceedings which took place last week in the House of Commons in reference to the Burials Bill, which was rejected by a majority of forty-four. As the *North British Daily Mail* pointed out, the opposition to it was thoroughly organized by the Church party, under the leadership of that priestly young person, Lord Cranborne. A whip was sent out by the Church Parliamentary Committee, of which his lordship is the chairman, urging members of Parliament to vote against the Bill. What was this dreadful measure that they were so anxious to defeat? It was but a small assertion of public rights. The object of the Bill was to prevent unseemly contention in connection with the provision of new cemeteries, and with the burial of the dead both in churchyards and cemeteries. But the promoters of the measure committed the unpardonable sin of proposing to interfere with the privileges of the pampered Church regarding the "consecration" of the soil in which bodies are to undergo the process of decomposition. The power of the Church to "consecrate" decay had to be defended. Though the English Establishment thus claims to be the Church of the dead, there should surely be some regard for the rights of the living. What the Bill proposed was, to give to Burial Boards and Parish Councils the legal right which the sanitary authorities have of deciding whether burial places should be wholly or partially "consecrated" or not, whether any and what mortuary chapels should be erected, and what the burial fees and charges should be. It seems that, to the sacerdotalists of the Salisbury family type, the Bill was nothing less than sacrilege. To them it was horrible that sanitation should be considered in connection with "consecration," and that the "priests" of the Church of England should be debarred from exacting whatever fees

they might choose to fix. Why should they agree to anything that would give greater freedom to burial authorities, or that would tend to prevent burial scandals? That was too much to ask of them. They had their privileges to defend—the privileges that make "God's Acre" not God's, but the clergy's. So, of course, the Tory party mustered to the defence, and the Anglican "priests" defeated the people, and once more proved the Church to be an enemy to human freedom.

The same kind of wicked misuse of Church power is being shown in the House of Commons in reference to the Education Bill, which is one of the greatest frauds ever attempted to be forced upon the nation. It is barefaced pandering to the Church and its priests, at the sacrifice of justice, and at the expense of those who do not believe in those teachings to inculcate which the money is asked. Of course the Bill will pass, for it is being pushed through the House of Commons with all the force the Tories and the Church people can command. It is generally conceded that the Bill will not be a settlement of the question; and I, in common with the Liberals, shall hail with delight any further legislative movement that will undo the mischief which this child of the Tory and Church alliance will be sure to cause. Mr. John Morley, in his speech at Oxford on February 20, put forth the main objections to the Bill in the following admirable manner:—

"You know there are six or seven what we may term secondary objections that we take to what is called the Voluntary Schools Bill. First, that a large sum of public money, £615,000 or £620,000, is going to be handed over to private managers, without any control by the parents or inhabitants of the place generally. They are very particular, our Tory and Anglican friends, as to the rights of the parent. They talk enormously as to the rights of parents to give a child what religious instruction he or they may desire. But as for giving the parent any sort of right in the administration or management of the school, they say they will rather shut the doors than admit the parents to management. Second, we say that there is no security that this large sum of public money shall go to promote educational efficiency. Third, we say that there is no relief hinted at in those good parishes where the Nonconformist child has to go to an Anglican school. Fourth, we say that, though mainly subsisting upon public money, there is no security against the imposition of religious tests—a hateful word—yes, a hateful word—of religious tests to any of the teaching staff. Fifth, our objection is that these favors are to be reserved to what are called necessitous schools, though we do not know in the least from the Bill what a necessitous school means. But I suppose, to put it in very plain English, it means a school where the want of liberality in subscriptions, and where there has been bad and inefficient management—that these schools are to have out of your pockets and mine £620,000 a year, while the cheerful giver to these Voluntary schools is sent empty away from this grant. I wonder if you have realized where more than one-sixth of this money is to go to. It is to go to the county where I was born, the county of Lancashire—£114,000 out of this £620,000 is to go to Lancashire. Lancashire, with its untold wealth, is the necessitous county. There is a sixth objection—there is no definite security that the grant shall not lower the level of subscriptions; a most important point."

As to Voluntary schools, Mr. Morley stated the case thus:—

"Do you ever ask yourselves what is a Voluntary school, and what is a voluntary subscription? The Voluntary school is a school where the State pays, I think it is twenty-eight shillings out of thirty-eight shillings; perhaps it is more. That is putting it most favorably. Three and a half millions of public money go to schools which call themselves Voluntary, and the managers of which take great credit to themselves for their liberality in keeping these schools open. The State, that is to say, does three-fourths, or seventy-five per cent., or fifteen shillings out of a pound. On the strength of this five shillings of his own money, as against fifteen of other people's money, the clerical manager is to appoint the teacher, and to have the creed of his own sect taught as the only religious teaching in that school. I say, what is the philosophy of voluntary subscriptions? I think it was very fairly stated last year by the illustrious prelate now at the head of the English Church, Dr. Temple. I beg your attention to this short passage: 'Our subscriptions have not only convinced the country that we are in downright earnest in the matter, but have saved the country a considerable amount of money. Churchmen often urge that they have to pay school rates like

others, and school subscriptions besides, and ask why they should bear this extra burden. The answer is that it is the price of keeping the invaluable privilege of appointing the teachers without any interference. In no other way can they permanently keep it.' That is a perfectly fair statement; but, if you listen to Lord Cranborne and some of those gentlemen in the House of Commons, you will find that is all forgotten, and they want to have the privilege without paying for it; you and I ought to pay. It is perfectly clear Parliament is going to pass an Act which will call into existence diocesan bodies. 'Diocesan bodies'—I don't like the sound of 'diocesan bodies'; it is not a national sound. They will be composed, I don't know on what principles or by what methods, of clerical managers and clerically-minded laymen; and to these ecclesiastical and semi-ecclesiastical bodies you are going to hand over the distribution of £615,000 of hard cash, collected from all the taxpayers. That, I think, is the case, and I say, if that is the case, it is unsound in principle, and unworkable in application. There have been some attempts, pretty audacious, to say that this is popular control. Anybody who says that a diocesan body represents popular control does not know what popular control is. I understand that where popular control is exerted, it means that the money is to be applied under the supervision of the taxpayers who provide the money; but that won't come to pass here. The taxpayers provide the money, and a body—I never speak evil of dignitaries—a body of bishops, rural deans, archdeacons, and all the rest of the hierarchy, will be the advisers."

I have quoted from Mr. John Morley at some length because he has given the objections to the Bill in a concise form, and because, by reproducing them here, the readers of the *Freethinker* will be able to refer to them easily. To my mind, the principal objections to the Bill are these: It is intended as a blow to our Board schools, which, although they are not perfect, teach less theology than do what are called Voluntary schools. The money to be given under the Bill will be used by the Church to impart to children an inferior education, which will be still more deteriorated by enforcing upon children creeds and dogmas that must prove injurious to their young minds. Finally, the Bill will place education more than ever under the control of the Church, an institution which has never proved itself adequate for the task.

Cardinal Vaughan, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, has spoken out very frankly upon the Education Bill. He says that it is while the child is young that it must be thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of Christianity; that the Catholics will only accept the financial advantages as an instalment towards voluntary education; and, finally, that the Catholics are not satisfied with Board schools, because they are incompetent to hand down Christianity to the coming generation. Those were the statements made by the Cardinal at Derby on February 23, and a more priestly pronouncement was never uttered. We know that both Churches—Catholic and Protestant—are anxious to catch the child before its mind is sufficiently developed to enable it to detect the ecclesiastical beguilements. But, as Secularists, we plead for the protection of children from theological allurements, which are a curse to the mental health of the rising generation. We can understand the religious dissatisfaction with Board schools, for the simple reason that priestly usurpation is not allowed. Our duty is to war with all our energy against theology and priestcraft of every Church, and to vindicate the true principle of education, for that is the proper preparation for our boys and girls before performing the secular duties of this life; and it ought to include all the training that is necessary for any other life, if one there be.

CHARLES WATTS.

To my observation human nature has not sensibly changed during the last thirty years. I doubt not that there are truths as plainly obvious and as generally denied, as those contained in "Man's Place in Nature," now awaiting enunciation. If there is a young man of the present generation who has taken as much trouble as I did to assure himself that they are truths, let him come out with them, without troubling his head about the barking of the dogs of St. Ernulphus. *Veritas prevalebit*—some day; and, even if she does not prevail in his time, he himself will be all the better and the wiser for having tried to help her. And let him recollect that such great reward is full payment for all his labor and pains.—*Thomas Henry Huxley, "Collected Essays," vol. vii.*

THE BLESSED LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

LIGHT is a good thing to have. It is what we are all seeking—that is, all except those who love darkness rather than light, which, by the way, comprehends the great majority of Christians, who are so much attached to the creed that they have no desire to know any truth that conflicts with it.

Ajax prayed for light, and got it—so Homer tells us; but then he was a heathen, and prayed to old Jove. The Christian's God never grants anything in answer to prayer. But then the Christian never asks for light; he is content with what he calls "the blessed light of the gospel," and so he shuts his eyes to all light that comes from any other source.

But what is this light of the gospel? Will it light men in their search for truth? or is it like the heathen oracles that were given in such ambiguous language that whoever consulted them was likely to be lighted to destruction if he acted upon the answers he received to his questions?

Whoever has been in the habit of attending church or prayer-meeting, or even who has had much acquaintance with Christians, has often heard the blessed light of the gospel extolled as the only sure and reliable guide to truth, and, through that, to salvation.

If that is so, then why is it that the whole Christian world does not believe alike? The Christian Church has been split into a thousand sects, all guided by the light of the gospel, and all denouncing each other as heretics, from the time of the quarrel between St. Paul and the rest of the saints—the immediate disciples of Jesus at Jerusalem—about the binding necessity of keeping the Jewish law, down to this "year of grace," 1897, with its thousands of differing sects, all following the light of the gospel, and all going in different directions.

In the first century, immediately after Christ had taken his flight up into the air, and before he had hardly warmed his seat at the right hand of his father, the immediate disciples who had constantly attended on his teaching, and who knew better than anybody else exactly what his doctrines were—led by his brother John, and Peter, the man he had expressly appointed chief and head of his church—with myriads of Jews who had been converted to the religion of Jesus—all held that the gospel preached by their master led only to a new sect of Jews, and that the Gentiles had no part in it except by being circumcized, and becoming Jews.

Saint Paul, an apostate Jew, and, like all apostates, a bitter hater of the faith he had left, went out among the Gentiles, and preached an entirely different doctrine. He denounced the disciples, and established a new religion antagonistic to the Jews.

It is worth noticing that the disciples of Jesus never called themselves Christians. That was a name that was adopted by the followers of Paul at Antioch, from Christ—not a name, but a title which was applied to all the various saviors that had at different times appeared in the world.

Paul, having a wider field, and greater ability than all the disciples together, got the start of the Nazarenes, as the followers of Jesus at Jerusalem were called, and built up a new religion. The consequence was that the new sect entirely disappeared among the Jews in the second generation. There is no trace of any Christians among them from that time to this. Both of these parties, walking by the light of the gospel, walked off in opposite directions—one into heathenism, and the other back to Judaism.

The new Pauline, Gentile Christianity grew into a great organization; but out of it sprung hundreds of heresies, so-called sects that, guided by the light of the gospel, wandered away from the dominant Church. They were suppressed by votes in the councils, by majorities obtained by fraud, trickery, intimidation, and assassination, such as would disgrace a political convention in our own time. And when the Church obtained political power, they were put down by the iron hand of persecution. The light of the gospel became a dangerous light to walk by, and frequently led to the light of the faggot and the stake.

The great split of the Church into eastern and western, the Greek and the Roman, became permanent through the conquests of the Turks, who stepped between the rival factions and generously allowed both parties to follow the light of the gospel in opposite directions.

Then came Martin Luther holding up his torch, which he called the light of the gospel. One-half of Europe lit their torches by his light, and fell into the procession.

The two rival lights, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant, marching in different directions, came in conflict. For thirty years the war lasted, devastating the fairest portion of Europe, and destroying one-half of its inhabitants. The light of the gospel was applied impartially to the palace and the cottage; and a fire was kindled that consumed growing crops as well as prosperous cities. But now political considerations begun to have weight in the quarrel, and France, a Roman Catholic country, putting out her gospel-light and lighting that of common sense, threw her weight into the scale of the Protestants; and, both parties having become thoroughly exhausted, a peace was made by which each party was to retain its own gospel-light, and follow it wherever it led. And now the Protestant Church, having won its independence and established the right of private judgment—in principle, not practically—immediately began to break up into hundreds of differing sects, each one walking by its own gospel-light. If there had been any actual light, it would have resembled the breaking-up of a torchlight procession, where everyone went his own way to his home.

The Roman Catholic Church, having been defeated in the struggle with science, and finding the Bible altogether unreliable, put out its gospel-light and relegated it to the old lumber-yard of past things. It now walks by the light of an infallible Church, and repudiates the gospel, which is a very wise thing to do; because it enables the Church to escape the antagonism of science, and to pronounce its infallible judgment in favor of facts that science has discovered and proved beyond all dispute. Its infallibility is an elastic quality that enables it to change old lies into new truths whenever it becomes necessary for its own reputation, though its infallible judgment of to-day contradicts its infallible judgment of yesterday.

It is a weakness of the Protestant Church that it started with the establishment of the infallibility of the Bible; but, in fact, it could do nothing else. It could not oppose the old faith unless it appealed to some authority more infallible than the Church, and so it tied itself to an infallible Bible that bound it fast for all time, though the book should be proved false a thousand times. For that reason the light of the gospel may be called "The light of other days"; or, more properly, "The light that never was on land or sea." It leads us nowhere but into the dim past—back to the days of barbarism, when man knew nothing of the truths that modern research and discovery have brought to light.

Those who talk the most about the light of the gospel are the ones who never read it; or, if they do, they shut off their thinking apparatus while they read. They are like the little steamboat that ran on the Illinois river that Lincoln told about. It had a five-foot boiler and a seven-foot whistle, and when they let on the whistle the boat stopped running.

When the preachers grow eloquent talking about the blessed light of the gospel, you may be sure that their brains have stopped running.

We have seen that the gospel-light is likely to lead its votaries astray in matters of opinion; but it is worse than that. It throws a false light upon the path of morality. The man who can believe that all his rascality has been forgiven, because somebody else has been punished for it, is a fit candidate for the penitentiary; but the gospel sheds its baleful light further than this: it lights the rascal to keep on sinning with the assurance that he can at any time wipe out the whole score with the merits of Jesus, and be received into heaven with all the more honor in proportion to the enormity of his crimes. "The greater the sinner, the greater the saint," is proverbial, and has the sanction of the gospel.

The light of the gospel is an *ignus fatuus*, a will-o'-the-wisp, a phosphorescence exhaled from the damps and fogs of a dead and rotten past. In the words of the poet Cowper:—

'Tis like the light that putrefaction breeds
In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds.
It shines by night, but, ushered into day,
The stench remains, the lustro dies away.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

J. P. RICHARDSON.

There is one road to peace, and that is truth.—*Shelley.*

CHRISTIAN ORIGINS.

THE third volume of Mr. F. J. Gould's *Concise History of Religion* (published by Watts and Co., for the Rationalist Press Committee) deals with "Christian Origins," and gives an account of Jewish and Christian literature to the end of the second century. It is admirably written, and will occupy a distinct place of its own. Mr. Gould has mastered the results of what is sometimes called the Higher Criticism, and takes his own course without a slavish submission to "authorities." "If I have differed from Lightfoot and Salmon on the one side," he says, "I have dissented from Davidson and Hausrath and the author of 'Supernatural Religion' on the other." It is also a merit of Mr. Gould's that he regards religion as a part of sociology, and his "story of the Church connects itself intimately with the life of the world at large." His "literary courtesy," to use his own expression, is never at fault; but, after all, there is such a thing as the partiality of impartiality. Benevolence is a sweet virtue; in criticism, however, it is liable to be practised at the expense of truth. It appears to us that Mr. Gould does not recognize—perhaps he shrinks from recognizing—the large part which sheer imposture has played in the production of religious literature. Those who were imposed upon were simply credulous, but those who operated the imposition must have been conscious of falsehood, whether their motive was the edification of the faithful or the promotion of the welfare of a body with which their interests were associated.

Mr. Gould opens with a spirited account of the disorders, the siege, and the fall of Jerusalem. In this he is guided by a sound instinct. But he does not, in our opinion, grasp the full significance of this event. The fall of Jerusalem, its practical obliteration from the map of the world, was the making of Christianity. First, it destroyed the possibility of any critical sifting of the Gospel story; secondly, it abolished the dominant Judaic centre of the new faith, and compelled it to become cosmopolitan. From that moment Christianity had but one career open to it—the career of universality. Now the national religions had been broken up under the Roman Empire; a new religion, unhampered by national limitations, was bound to grow up; and circumstances gave the favorable opportunity to the religion which was founded by Jesus and Paul. The subsequent history of Christianity is but the history of its adjustment to the conditions of success. When we say that it Paganised itself, we only say that it pursued the line of least resistance towards a final Catholicism.

A good account is given of the first appearance of "the New People." Mr. Gould points out that, however the name of Christians originated, the use of it received an impetus from the confusion of *Christos*, the anointed one, with *Chrestos*, a common term signifying "good, excellent, gracious." Even the divine mother of Egyptian mythology was called "Isis Chreste." On the whole, Mr. Gould believes that the name of Christians has no necessary connection with "the Jesus of the Christian history." It is all the more wonderful, therefore, to find him citing the Suetonius passage in the life of Claudius as referring to Jesus Christ.

We may here introduce Mr. Gould's treatment of Christian forgeries. He dismisses the famous Josephus passage without a word of reprobation. After quoting the no less famous Tacitus passage, he says, "The genuineness of this passage has been doubted," and this only in a footnote. But the whole Neronian persecution of the Christians hangs upon this passage, and the question of its authenticity ought to be settled. The Pliny passage is treated as genuine, or else as a very "temperate forgery." But does not its historic value depend entirely upon its genuineness? It is no use to evade these problems. Take again the celebrated Vienne letter, giving an account of the sufferings of the Christians in Gaul. Mr. Gould says it is difficult to sift the probable from the legendary elements of this narrative; yet he adds that "we must be content to accept it, if not as historical, yet as a graphic token of the terror which the scattered groups of Christians sometimes experienced amid hostile pagan populations." But why "must" we accept the narrative in this way? George Long, the historian, argues that the Vienne letter should be accepted or rejected as it stands; to pick and choose from it is not criticism, but personal preference. Gibbon long ago demonstrated the absurdity of the history of Christian

persecutions before the accession of Constantine; and when imagination, innocent or guilty, plays so large a part in such literature, it cannot reasonably be appealed to in the absence of corroborative evidence.

Mr. Gould will pardon us for saying that his sections on Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus, being very good within their limits, serve to emphasize the unimportance of the greater part of the religion whose origins he is tracing. When a religion dies, it dies absolutely. When a philosophy dies, it dies but partially, for the good it contains can be lifted without injury from its surroundings and incorporated into another system. The fine things of Seneca, of Marcus Aurelius, of Epictetus, are fine always. They appeal to reason and to natural sanctions; whereas the best things ascribed to Jesus make no appeal to reason, and invariably appeal to supernatural sanctions. "Blessed are the merciful" is good; but its value is destroyed by the addition, "for they shall obtain mercy." This turns morality into huckstering, and removes it from sense to theology.

We have nothing but praise for the account which Mr. Gould gives of the origin of the four Gospels. His account of the Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, the Revelation, and of the writings of the early Fathers, is interesting and instructive. We should like to see it in the hands of a host of general readers.

The lengthy section on Jesus is a good bit of workmanship. Mr. Gould takes more of the Gospels as historical than we do, but on a problem so obscure only a fool would dogmatize. The clearly legendary and mythical elements of the Gospel story are adequately paralleled from Jewish and Pagan sources. "The very obscurity of Jesus," says Mr. Gould, "and the very ignorance of his followers, made all the more possible the growth of *myth* around his memory." This is acute and true.

We have not time and space to do Mr. Gould's work justice. We cannot close, however, without paying a final tribute to his research, his judgment, his good temper, and his literary power. His book should have a wide circle of readers. No other single volume, that we know of, gives so valuable a history of Christian Origins.

G. W. F.

THE PREACHERS OF DAMNATION.

CAST-OFF garments go not only to the poor of our own country, but are often exported abroad to clothe, and bring diseases upon, the heathen. In a similar way, doctrines which are being discarded by civilized Christians are taken by the missionaries abroad. At home Satan is rarely mentioned, and hell is quite refrigerated. But these yarns are found to work with the heathen, who are threatened with vengeance if they reject the blessed Gospel. Now, as a matter of fact, the mass of them do reject it. Whether among Moslems, Hindus, or Confucians, Christian success is infinitesimal, failure all but universal. Mark the consequence, on the missionaries' own showing. If they had never heard the Gospel, they could not reject it. Their future destiny might be left in mystery, or they might be saved by doing their best according to the light of nature. But, on the missionary view, the case of a man, to whom the Gospel has been once preached, and who has nevertheless rejected it, is wholly different. Salvation has been offered to him, but he has spurned the Savior. No obscurity rests any longer upon his doom. The worm that dieth not, the fire that never shall be quenched, are his portion for ever and ever, Amen.

Now, I ask how any humane man can assume the frightful responsibility of preaching to the heathen? For he thus becomes not only a preacher, but a bringer of damnation; and the more zealous he is the worse, for it is certain that for everyone who accepts his gospel there are a thousand who reject it, and whom he thus sends to eternal fire.

Recollect that, if all the torments, mental and bodily, under which the whole creation has groaned and travailed in pain together from the beginning until now, were condensed into one frightful mass, the mass would be a speck, an indivisible atom, when compared with the sufferings of one single immortal soul protracted through eternity. Has any tyrant, a recognized scourge of the human race, brought down such storms of misery on his species as must then be ascribed to the active missionary who has failed? And they have all failed—failed a thousand times over for once they have been successful. What unfathomable misery, then, must have been brought about by the preachers of the Gospel, who, on their own showing, must be considered bringers, not of redemption, but of damnation.

BABBALANJA.

ACID DROPS.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER politely declines the offer of the Senate of Cambridge University to confer upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science. Complimentary titles cannot add lustre to the name of "our great philosopher," as Darwin called him.

Mr. Gladstone's reply to the Pope on the validity of Anglican orders will be published before Easter in a new volume of his "Gleanings." It is a pity that the G. O. M. has nothing better to do at his time of life than to discuss such nonsense. The people at large are losing all interest in these matters, and don't care twopence whether the Holy Ghost belongs to the Church of England or to the Church of Rome. The Holy Ghost doesn't feed empty bellies, clothe naked backs, or shelter homeless heads.

At a meeting of the Aston School Board, in considering the offer of Mr. R. Cadbury to give Bibles as prizes, the Rev. A. L. Chattaway, the Roman Catholic representative, said that he was utterly opposed to putting into the hands of children under the age of thirteen or fourteen years an open Bible for indiscriminate reading. "It was not a fit and proper thing that a book even like the Holy Scriptures should be read by the children from the first chapter to the last. Personally, he was also opposed to any speeches being made when the Bibles were given to the children, though at no time had he opposed Mr. Cadbury's gift. Every member of the Board who was a father of a family would, he was sure, agree that the Bible on every page of it was not fit for the children of the Board schools to read at his or her own sweet will." Yet even Mr. Chattaway holds that the book which is unfit for children to read is, nevertheless, divine.

The New York *Sun* for Monday, February 22, gave nearly all its back page to "Sermons on the Inspiration of Scripture" preached the day before. Some of the sermons were about Jonah, one was on Balaam's Ass, and the *Sun* headlines are unspeakably funny. "Perhaps a Shark Swallowed Jonah," "Balaam's Ass did not Talk." Fancy such headlines in a big London daily. It would cause a revolution.

The *Woman's Bible* was reviewed in the *Freethinker* a considerable time ago. It is now being noticed by other journals. Considerable space was devoted to it in last week's *Sun*. It was also reviewed in Tuesday's *Westminster Gazette*. The last journal is rather shocked at the outspokenness of the Liberal women in America, who are placing the Bible in its true light before their sisters of the English-speaking world. "It is certainly not clever," the *Westminster* says, "and many people will think it comes perilously near being blasphemous." We hope our contemporary will recover.

Priests will do anything for money that public opinion permits, and in Ireland it permits nearly anything. The Revs. W. P. Kearney and P. Gilseman announce a sweepstake on the Liverpool Grand National Race for the benefit of the building fund of a new church at Kinnegad. The first prize in this ecclesiastical sweepstake is to be £10, the second £5, and the third £2. The drawing is to take place in the New Schools, Kinnegad, "in the presence of a respectable committee," and, in order to stimulate the sale of tickets, the agent who sells the ticket for the winner will receive £1. After this it should be in order for priests to give sporting tips for the benefit of the church. Many good Irish Catholics would believe the tips had divine sanction, until undeceived by losing their cash.

In an article on "Pagan Ireland," in the current *Westminster Review*, Mr. J. W. Brestin points out that at the present day, to the Irish peasant, the fairies, "wise women," enchanted hills and wells, charms and spells, are "the most potent influences of life." Catholicism does not stamp out Paganism. The belief in "cures" is a widespread superstition, mingled with the usages of the Church. The "wise woman" works her cure with prayer and the sign of the Cross, and the most grossly superstitious are invariably the most fervent in their religious observances. St. Patrick is believed to have broken the spell of black magic, "though it is still possible to sell yourself to the Devil, and secure by his aid the benefit of your neighbor's goods. The Devil, however, has not the sharpest of wits, and is easily cheated of his bargain."

One of the worst features of Irish superstition is the belief of the peasant in the sanctity of the priest. His "riverence" is invested with attributes bordering on the supernatural. The peasant sinks on his knees as he passes. A house is supposed to be sanctified by his entrance. "His curse is feared, and numberless are the tales of luckless individuals who drew it down upon them. In every illness,

even the most petty, his services are required; and to have him read an office is considered more effectual than the best of medical skill. What can the doctor do if the prayers of the priest are of no avail? Readers of this article will think that one of the prime necessities for Ireland is a propaganda of Freethought.

The Prince of Wales regrets his inability to accede to the request of Mr. Gogay, the Guardian of St. Saviour's Union, that his Royal Highness would advise that pregnant women in prisons and Poor Law establishments should be put to do needlework instead of picking oakum. It is a great pity, though, that someone cannot interfere. Brutality to a pregnant woman is doubly disgraceful. Her offspring, at any rate, might be given a chance. It is such matters as this in which the voice of women ought to be heard. The average man is of too coarse a fibre to allow for the delicacies of maternity beyond the limits of his own home.

The unfortunate inmates of the Female Convict Prison at Aylesbury have reason to rejoice. A nice chapel for them has just been consecrated by the Bishop of Reading. They can now sit in comfort while a well-paid man of God preaches at them about sin and the wrath to come.

"We are of opinion that more care should have been taken to find out the condition of the heart before the administration of the anæsthetic." So said the coroner's jury that "sat" on the body of a poor little fellow called Isaacs, aged six, who was to have been operated on in Guy's Hospital. He died from cardiac failure before the operation was performed, having been "sent off" by a mixture of alcohol, chloroform, and ether. Had it been a private operation on a rich patient, there would have been no lack of precautions. We commend this typical case to the attention of those who are so eager to see the hospitals endowed under their existing management by means of the Prince of Wales's Fund.

The following resolution has been passed by the committee of the Humanitarian League: "That this committee is of opinion that the institution of the Prince of Wales's Hospital Fund for London is likely to cause more harm than good to the general community, if it is used as a means of postponing the much-needed public or municipal control of London hospitals, and unless adequate guarantees are given that the sums subscribed to the Fund shall be administered wholly for humane purposes, and not for what is called 'the advancement of medical science' by experimentation on men or animals."

Ingersoll says in the *New York Journal*: "The Halls and Buckleys, the Eatons and Abbotts, and all who have been 'called' to preach the Gospel, should throw all the miracles away. They ought to know that this is a natural world—the endless chain of cause and effect has never been broken. They ought to know that all the miracles are the children of ignorance, cunning, and mendacity. These ministers ought to know that there are many interpolations in the New Testament. When they find a passage inconsistent with the character of Christ they ought to denounce it as a mistake, an interpolation. If Christ said that he came to bring a sword, and not peace, he was malicious. If he offered a reward to men who would desert their wives and children, he was infamous. If he pretended to cast out devils, he was an impostor or insane."

We are not so sure that these passages are interpolations. The Gospel of Mark evidently preserves the oldest records, and here Jesus is a mere caster-out of demons and a miracle worker. As "Abracadabra" has lately shown, the beautiful sayings ascribed to him were a later compilation, taken from many sources.

Some zealot for God's glory started a lie a long time ago, representing that Miss Maud Ingersoll had joined the Presbyterian church, as a protest against her father's godlessness. It has been denied time and time again, but the original lie is foot-loose, and will go on for ever. Rev. W. W. Landrum, of Atlanta, Ga., lately repeated the falsehood in his Baptist pulpit, but, unlike the generality of his craft, he retracted his statement on receipt of Miss Maud's letter, from which we make the following extract: "Neither my sister nor myself has ever been associated with any church, although our father (Colonel Ingersoll) has always wished us to study and think for ourselves. We agree with him most heartily in his religious belief, and think he is doing the greatest possible good."

Over three millions of persons in India are in receipt of public relief. If left to the tender mercies of their Almighty Father, they would completely starve.

The plague in Bombay has led to a revival of religion. Hindus, Moslems, Jews, Parsees, Catholics, and Protestants are all said to be more regular at worship and more fervent

in prayers and supplications for mercy. God's chance comes when people are miserable. In their happiness they forget him. That is the understood theological explanation of misery. God permits the Devil to afflict us in order to bring us down on our marrow bones.

The *Sunday Reader* gives a picture of a monster Moslem prayer-meeting near Bombay, where between forty and fifty thousand of the faithful prostrated themselves in unison and struck their heads upon the ground, imploring Allah to take away the plague. The scene forcibly reminds one of how much all religion is founded on terror, and a mere remnant of devil-worship.

The *Sunday Reader* extols this as a striking example to Christians. We should say it is a warning to sensible people. While people believe in prayer and prostration they will never attend to sanitation. Why should they? If prayer will avert disease, why look to other remedies? The theory of religion is a premium on ignorance and inattention to secular duties.

A man was found by the police a few days ago at 14 Sherman-street, Chicago, on his knees engaged in prayer. He had spent several hours in that attitude teasing God for employment. The poor fellow had been idle for nearly a year, and when all other hope failed he made a personal but ineffectual appeal to the higher powers. He was probably ignorant of the fact that the Creator of worlds has no jobs to let. The preachers had taught him falsely.

A Boston dispatch says: "Harry Harvey, a watchman at Squires' pork-packing establishment, went insane on religion to-day, and three policemen were roughly handled before they overpowered him. Harvey lived with his wife on Prospect-street, Cambridge, and their domestic life has till to-day been happy. He has been a constant attendant at Evangelist Moody's services at Tremont Temple, and so enthusiastic did he become that he gave evidence of violence to-day. A physician at once ordered that he be removed to a padded cell, lest he should kill his wife and some of the neighbors; and it required the combined strength of five men to overpower him and place him in a patrol waggon."

G. R. Rash, of Wayne, Nebraska got his mind unhinged at a revival meeting, and went home and killed his wife and three children. He has been arrested, and talks freely of his crime. He says: "I went from the church the night of the murder with the minister's farming-stone in my hand [a large soapstone]. A vision said that must be the instrument of my family's execution. My wife met me at the door. I told her she must die. She said she was not ready to die yet; but I told her that God had ordered that her time had come. Then I hit her with the stone, and it broke in two pieces, falling on the floor. My children were in bed, but my little boy and girl awakened, and the boy came running out and called upon me not to hurt his mother. Having killed my wife, I then killed the children, using the stone with which I had killed my wife."

President McKinley took his oath to "preserve, protect, and defend" the constitution of the United States on a Bible specially presented for the occasion by the African Methodist (Negro) Episcopal Church. It would have been just as efficacious if he had taken it on a copy of Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*. Probably the Negro Church and President McKinley both overlooked the fact that God Almighty, in his New Testament, which we suppose is more up to date than his Old Testament, says "Swear not at all."

The Pope has instructed Monsignor Martinelli, at Washington, to present his congratulations to President McKinley. The Pope wants to stand well with Uncle Sam's new President. Of course. That goes without saying.

Here is another pretty illustration of the way in which "conversion" stories get afloat, and how empty they are found on examination. There is a Baptist minister at Watford, the Rev. James Stuart, who, in a sermon preached on February 28, told a remarkable yarn on the authority of the Rev. Dr. Maclaren, of Manchester. It was to the effect that a member of a certain congregation grew sceptical, whereupon his minister preached a series of special sermons on the Foundations of Christianity. Soon afterwards the man presented himself for church membership. The minister asked him which of the sermons it was that converted him. "Not any," was the reply; "an old lady slipped down the church steps, and as I helped her up she said: 'Oh, thank you! I do hope you love my Savior.' And then I was not satisfied till I did."

Dr. Maclaren was written to by a gentleman anxious for first-hand information, and asked to answer the following questions: What was the name of the converted sceptic? the name of the minister? the name of the old lady? the name of the church? the date of the occurrence? Dr.

Maclaren replied that he had no recollection of the incident, and had sent on the inquirer's letter to Mr. Stuart. Three days later the famous Manchester preacher wrote as follows: "I am not aware of any obligation on me to answer your catechism, which sounds as if you wished to insinuate a doubt of my veracity. But, not to be discourteous, I inform you that Mr. Stuart has kindly referred me to my printed sermon, from which he took the incident. On referring to the sermon, I find that the incident is introduced thus: 'I was reading the other day a story in some newspaper or other about, etc., etc.'" So all the foundation for this well-circulated story is "some newspaper or other"! Accuracy, thy name is Christian!

The member who represents the Rev. W. Jones Price, of Plaistow, in the House of Commons must be careful. Writing to the *Chronicle*, the reverend gentleman says: "I have given our M.P. a free hand until to-day." That free hand is now withdrawn, and the poor M.P. is ordered to vote the right way on the Cretan question—the right way, of course, being the way of the Rev. W. Jones Price.

Canon Gore preached a Lenten sermon in Westminster Abbey on Sunday afternoon. He strongly recommended fasting as a spiritual exercise. Well, it might be for some of the paunchy persons we have seen waddling to church on Sunday. There are a multitude of people, however, to whom fasting is no rarity. Canon Gore forgot to add that these habitual fasters should receive the superflux of their more fortunate "brethren."

A man's Christianity, said Canon Gore, is measured by his capacity for enduring grief and pain. With a view to enlarging this capacity, he advised his hearers to give up (say) smoking for a few weeks. But why give up *smoking*? Surely that is a partial training for life in the portion of the after-world for which most men are booked.

While the population of Glasgow increased 34 per cent. between 1876 and 1896, the increase of church attendance at the leading Presbyterian churches has only been 14 per cent.

"The Bishopric of Antigua is going begging," says the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Nobody wants it. Of course there are souls to be saved, but that is a spiritual consideration, and it is outweighed by worldly conditions which are not exactly alluring.

Canon Trench, the new vicar of Kendale, has had to reprove his congregation for financial backsliding. Out of 557 coins received in a recent Sunday collection, no less than 481 were pence or halfpence, the rest being threepennybits, with the exception of just a few shillings, contributed (*Modern Society* says) by the millionaires of the congregation.

The Washington newsboys, having been harried by the local clergy for crying Sunday papers, have petitioned Congress to take the men of God in hand and enact regulations for them. One of their proposals is that no minister shall be allowed to kiss his wife on Sunday, nor any other man's wife any other day in the week. Another is, that ministers shall sell all they have and give to the poor. Washington newsboys are really too facetious. Where do they expect to go when they die?

The establishment of French power in Madagascar has, it appears, led to an unscrupulous persecution of the Protestants. A letter from an English missionary says: "In several instances our Protestant churches have been seized and mass performed in them; the schools have in many cases been handed over to the priests; the congregations have been browbeaten, threatened, and frightened into becoming, nominally, Roman Catholics. In very many cases they have been told by people in authority that if they continue Protestants they will be accounted as rebels." The natives have an exhibition of how these Christians love one another.

The New York men of God are much disturbed by a Mormon revival, carried on by Elder Brigham Roberts, who keeps in the background the good old Bible doctrine of polygamy—which, the orthodox Christians point out, the Mormons have not abandoned in theory, although they have discarded the practice in obedience to the law.

Elder Roberts says he has come from despised Utah to warn the people of New York that Christ would come again; that he would soon reappear upon earth; to repent and be ready for his coming. He wanted those before him to bear witness that he had delivered, in fulfilment of his appointment, this message to them.

The orthodox are raging, too, against Lyman Abbott's treatment of Jonah. The Baptist, Rev. Isaac Haldeman, after showing that Jesus endorsed Jonah, declared: "The

preacher who believes in the miracle of the resurrection and the miracle of the incarnation, and denies the miracle of Jonah, is inconsistent, and has lost his vocation, is guilty of treason to the Church, is a Judas, and, if he does not commit suicide or die, should be cast out."

James B. Inks was jerked to Jesus last month at Oregon, Holt Co., Missouri. He walked to the gallows with a firm step: "Gentlemen, I am going straight to heaven!" Then the drop fell, and his neck was broken by the fall. He must have been a good Christian man, or he would not have believed that there is a heaven. He murdered John Patterson, shooting him down on the street without a word of warning, on account of a fancied insult. "Salvation is free to all," from the orthodox standpoint. So James will get there.

"David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, in a sermon says religious revivals are a species of drunkenness, no more worthy of respect than the drunkenness of the gutters." He might have said it was a species of insanity.

The American Baptist Union, finding its affairs confronted with a debt of \$370,000, was compelled to cut down the missionary appropriation one-half. The Rev. Edward Chester, of Dindigul, writes: "The whole thing has made me sick. I have closed my boys' school, the funds being barely enough to support the girls' school." This is true clerical instinct. Let the boys go to the Devil if you can only hang on to the girls.

According to *La Croix*, of Paris, the number of Jesuit Fathers in England is given as 984, and of students and novices as 950. These are far more numerous in France, and still more so in Germany and the United States. A band of disciplined Freethinkers would upset all their machinations.

The commission appointed at the Trent anti-Masonic Congress last Michaelmas to inquire into the real existence of Diana Vaughan, who is alleged to have seen the Devil in a Palladist Lodge in Charleston in 1889 in the shape of a handsome young man, has decided that there is no evidence of her existence, though that of the Devil is unquestioned. As the commission was a private one, the votaries of Diana Vaughan, among whom are Mgr. Fava, Bishop of Grenoble, and the Venerable Canon Mustal, refused to accept its verdict. The historic congregation of the Holy Roman Inquisition has now been charged with investigating this extraordinary controversy. The members of this council are Cardinal Parocchi, Secretary, with Cardinals Vannutelli, Satolli, Massella, Vergo, Mertel, Granniello, Rampolla, Mazella, and Ledochowski, with thirty learned Monsignori and Doctors of Divinity as consultants.

It is now announced that Miss Diana Vaughan will positively appear in Paris sometime during April. Probably on the first of the month.

The late Catholic Congress at Lyons was decidedly anti-Semitic. "*Vive le Christ*" and "*a bas les Juifs*" were its two cries. Christianity and sectarian hatred go together wherever there is an attempted revival of Catholicism.

Mangasar Mangasarian, an Armenian, is an exponent of "Ethical Culture" in New York. This is how he explains the Bacchic miracle: "When, at the marriage at Cana, Jesus is declared to have turned water into wine, He did not really turn water into wine. But the people at that feast had partaken of so much wine that they were incapable of independent action of their wills. They were subject to hypnotic suggestion, and when Jesus offered them water to drink, and told them that He had changed the water to wine, they thought they were drinking wine." This "rationalizing" of all old legends is almost as irrational as orthodoxy, which at least preserves the earlier belief.

The Chamber of Representatives in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg have decided to put up the crucifix in courts of justice. It was pleaded for as a corrective to perjury.

The New York *Catholic Review* says the Church allows Jews and their worship to be "tolerated." But it continues: "It would never allow Jews to be a controlling power in a Christian State. As long as the Church was obeyed the Jews were powerless." Well, we know how it treated Jews in the days of its power. In its decline it attributes its evils either to the Jews or the Freemasons.

The proof that you believe what you declare
Is that you still stand firm, though throngs pass by;
Rather cry truth a lifetime to void air
Than flatter listening millions with one lie.
—Edgar Fawcett.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 14, Athenæum, Victoria-street, Derby: at 11, "The Crescent and the Cross in Crete"; at 3, "The Use and the Abuse of the Bible"; at 7, "The Doom of the Gods."

Tuesday and Wednesday, March 16 and 17, St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street, Bristol; public debate with the Rev. W. T. Lee on "Christianity or Secularism: which is the Better System?"

March 21, Athenæum Hall, London; 28, Huddersfield.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 14, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 21 and 28, Camberwell. April 4, Sheffield; 10, 11 and 12, Stanley, Durham. All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. B.—Your verse was inserted a fortnight ago.

Z. JORDAN, a Spiritualist, but a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, desires to correct a mistake in one of our "Acid Drops" in the issue for February 21, where Victor Wyld is confused with another person named Thomas Wild. Mr. Victor Wyld has nothing to do with the matters referred to in that paragraph.

H. JONES.—Your letter is well written, but as no one writes *against* the Presidency it seems a waste of space to print further correspondence on the subject.

CHILPERIC informs us that Dr. Sayce and Miss McLure have put in some unwarranted notes to Maspero's *Conflict of the Ages*, which were not mentioned in the *Athenæum* when it exposed the toning down of his heterodoxy.

C. D. CAMP.—Mr. Wheeler does not regard the question of the authenticity of the whole *Annals of Tacitus* as settled, though he regards the particular passage about the Christians with suspicion. One cannot always say, when quoting the first gospel, "if Matthew indeed wrote the book." Whoever wrote the *Annals of Tacitus* had something to go upon beyond imagination.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—The mistake was rectified last week. Thanks, all the same, for the correction.

ALERT.—Many Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

C. LECOQ.—Mr. Foote will try to arrange another visit to South Wales as soon as possible. Keep pegging away meanwhile.

A. F. WALTER.—The Camberwell Branch has our best wishes. It has maintained a gallant fight. We should like to assist it more powerfully. Thanks for your hope that there will be a good response to our appeal on behalf of the Lecture Scheme.

A. FIRTH.—Always glad to receive newspapers or useful cuttings.

S. J. B.—Your contributions are always welcome.

W. TREVOR.—We have seen Mr. Henry George's little book on Herbert Spencer, and regard it as ill-tempered, not to say insolent. Herbert Spencer has never sought wealth or titles; his means have always been limited, and his life has been devoted to a great intellectual achievement. Right or wrong, he deserves honor for *this*.

LECTURE SCHEME.—E. L. (Aberdeen), £2; Toby King, junior, 9s. 6d.; W. H. Harrap, 5s.; A. F. Walter, 2s.; E. R. Walter, 1s.; Mrs. S. Walter, 1s.; J. S. 1s.; A. Firth, 2s. 6d.; S. J. B., 2s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*: C. B., 10s.; Thornoy, 1s. *Per C. Cohen*: J. Kneebone, 4s. 6d.; G. H. M. Clusky, 2s. 6d.; collection at Cardiff, 5s. 9d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liverpool Evening Express—Birmingham Post—Lindsey Star—New York Public Opinion—Crescent—Islamic World—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—Little Candle—New York Sun—Orchestral Association Gazette—New York Journal—Catholic Review—Walthamstow Reporter—Isle of Man Times—Animal's Friend—Heywood Advertiser.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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.

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

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.

Children's Annual Party.

Collected at Athenæum Hall:—G. W., 1s.; G. Porter, 1s.; Yetton, 1s.; Julia, 2s. 6d.; No Name, 1s.; F. P., 2s. 6d.; Never Mind, 6d.; H. F. S., 10s.; G. Spencer, 1s.; F. G., 1s.; C. Lescare, 1s.; C. J., 1s.; A Friend, 1s.; G., 1s.; Brink, 1s.; W. E., 1s.; W., 1s.; E. S., 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Sourle, 5s.—R. FORDER, *Treasurer*.

SPECIAL.**THE LECTURE SCHEME.**

READERS of the *Freethinker* are desired to remember that March is another "Shilling Month." I am appealing on behalf of my Lecture Scheme, which is urgently in need of funds; in fact, it cannot be continued without prompt and generous support. Under this Scheme, during the past eighteen months, a great many lectures have been delivered in all parts of the country by the principal speakers of the National Secular Society. The local friends generally pay the cost of the hall and advertising, while I guarantee the lecturer a certain payment for his services. Sometimes I have been responsible for the local expenses too, in cases where new ground is being broken, or where there is occasion for a special effort. If this effort is allowed to drop, it will be a serious blow to Free-thought propaganda in this country. I do not want that to happen, although it would release me from some work, and more anxiety. A good deal of time still remains in March. Those who want to see this effort continued must help to realize their desire. I afford the opportunity, and if they do not take it the blame will lie on them, and not on me. Freethinkers who will do nothing to promote Free-thought might just as well be Christians. It is so easy for hundreds to send a shilling, and so easy for dozens to send more. Am I to suppose that they are too parsimonious, or too lazy; or that, being saved themselves from superstition, they do not care a straw who is damned? On every side the Churches are showing fresh activity, and the new Education Bill is another agency for manufacturing children into Christians. Are Freethinkers to be the only party to "let the world slide" and make no effort to promote their own principles?

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE delivers Sunday lectures to-day (March 14) for the first time in Derby, at the Athenæum, Victoria-street, morning, afternoon, and evening. The subjects are attractive, and the local Branch is looking forward to good meetings. On the following Tuesday and Wednesday Mr. Foote debates with the Rev. W. T. Lee in the St. James's Hall, Bristol, on Christianity and Secularism. This debate was to have taken place a few weeks ago, but had to be postponed in consequence of an accident.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured at the Athenæum upon "The New Christianity." Mr. Foote presided, and gave a very timely address upon the present crisis in the East. After the lecture, in response to the chairman's appeal, a goodly number of subscriptions were given to Miss Vance towards defraying the expenses of the coming Children's Party.

Mr. Watts lectures again this evening, Sunday, March 14, at the Athenæum, taking for his subject "The Christians' Last Attempt to Rescue the Bible." Mr. Watts has taken special care in preparing this lecture, which is a new one; we hope, therefore, he will have a crowded audience. It is a subject that should call forth a good debate, and no one would be better pleased than Mr. Watts if it has that result.

Mr. G. Roberts, the new secretary of the Plymouth Branch, informs us that Mr. Cohen has just given seven lectures in the district, four of which were under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. Owing to the horrid weather, the attendance was not as large as it might have been; but Mr. Roberts says that all the local friends were delighted with Mr. Cohen, and feel confident that "the temporary loss will be a tenfold gain when he comes again."

We have also received from Mr. Le Coq, the secretary of the Cardiff Branch, an account of Mr. Cohen's recent lectures in that district, two of which, on week-nights, were under the Lecture Scheme. The first was at Tredegar, a colliery town nineteen miles from Cardiff, and the second at Cardiff. Three lectures on the following Sunday in the Public Hall, Cardiff, were fairly attended. There was a good sale of literature at each meeting, and the Branch is looking forward to an increase in its membership. Further courses of lectures are desired in South Wales. The local sympathizers are asking when Mr. Foote is coming again.

The *Lindsey and Lincolnshire Star* has given insertion to excellent letters on "Foreign Missions" from Mr. J. Cherry, of Barrow, and Captain Monro, of Hull.

Colonel Ingersoll, the *New York Sun* says, was heartily applauded when, in his recent lecture in Montank Theatre, Brooklyn, he advocated the arbitration treaty between Great Britain and the United States.

In the March *Fortnightly Review* Mr. J. C. Bailey has a paper on "The Man Gibbon." Mr. Bailey says: "The call to be a scholar was in him from the first; the special call to history came later. Both were promptly, strenuously, unwearyingly obeyed; and to that cheerful and long-sustained obedience the historian owed one of the happiest of lives, and we owe the greatest work of history in a modern language."

A sign of the times was observed at Chicago in the preaching of a woman in the Jewish synagogue known as Sinai Temple. The lady's name is Hannah G. Solomon. The opening services were read by Professor Kohn, of the North-Western University, and the lady was introduced by the president of the congregation. "This incident makes history," he said. "It is the first time in all the history of our worship that such a scene as this has been possible. It is a triumph for womanhood, and a triumph for Jewish womanhood. It means as much to us as did the memorable sight of the Congress of Religions to all Christendom."

All members of the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S. are urged to attend the Annual General Meeting, which will be held in St. Anne's Hall on Sunday evening, March 21.

The Manchester Branch has engaged the large Co-operative Hall, Downing-street, for the delivery of six evening lectures by Mr. Cohen. The first will be delivered on Monday, March 15, and the remaining five on the following evenings. Admission is free, so good audiences should assemble. The chair will be taken at 8 o'clock. Mr. Cohen will bring his visit to a close by the delivery of three lectures in the Secular Hall on Sunday, March 21.

Our readers, especially the London ones, will not forget the Annual Children's Party, which takes place on March 31 at the Club Union large Hall. A good collection was taken at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, in response to Mr. Foote's appeal from the chair. A good deal more money, however, will be needed to defray the necessary expenses of this function. Rent, printing, and incidentals cost something. Then we like every child to have a toy or prize of some sort. Finally, and by no means least, there is the vast quantity of solids and liquids which children dispose of in some mysterious and almost supernatural manner. We want the little ones to have a good time. Surely their elders will find the wherewithal. We have all been children in our time, and when the child is absolutely dead in us we are only fit for our funerals.

Maternity and Deity.

When chloroform was first brought into British surgical practice fifty years ago, an enlightened clergy protested against its use in midwifery cases, as being an attempt to evade God's curse upon all daughters of Eve. According to the good book (which is the secret of Hingland's greatness), a woman is doomed to take her interesting events as they come, and every shriek uttered under the circumstances confirms the terewith of the Scriptures, even as a rainbow in the sky proves beyond all doubt that the Lord gave Noah a promise not to drown the world any more. This was quite clear to the parsons and ladies of 1846, consequently chloroform for child-birth sufferers had to be justified by some sort of antidotal quotation from the Book. Dr. Simpson reminded the Church that Adam was put to sleep by his Creator prior to the removal of his historic rib, and although this was rather irrelevant reasoning, seeing that Eve wasn't apparently put to sleep when little Cain became due, it sufficed to satisfy religious scruples in general. Or, rather, it gave the hardshell believers pause until their Gracious Queen settled the question by graciously consenting to be anesthetized at the birth of number eight baby. Then the archbishops and bishops felt sure that God doesn't care whether a female on the verge of maternity has a dreadful time or otherwise.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

This frightful declaration, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," has filled the world with agony and crime. Every letter of this passage has been sword and fagot; every word has been dungeon and chain. That passage made the sword of persecution drip with innocent blood through centuries of agony and crime. That passage made the horizon of a thousand years lurid with the fagot's flames.—*Ingersoll*.

"PETER BAYLE—LIBRE-PENSEUR."

THERE can be no doubt but that the learned author of the *Critical and Historical Dictionary* was a *libre-penseur* of the most advanced type, in spite of the fact that his orthodoxy has been pleaded for by his biographers.

M. de la Roche tells us that it is a great mistake to imagine that Bayle was not thoroughly convinced of the truth of the first article of religion, for that Peter had informed him, in a private conversation some three or four years before his death, "that it was impossible for the most subtle of Atheists to confute the arguments grounded upon the contrivance and wisdom conspicuous in the several parts of the universe."

In due fairness to the other side, however, the declaration of Bayle himself should be remembered, that "a man must necessarily make an option between philosophy and the gospel. If such a one is resolved to believe nothing but what is conformable to received truths, he then should embrace philosophy and leave Christian principles; but if he is for believing the incomprehensible mysteries of religion, he then must adhere to the Christian religion and leave philosophy, for to enjoy at the same time evidence and incomprehensibility can never be; the conjunction of these things is almost as impossible as the conjunction of the properties of a square and of a circle." It will be seen that Peter occupied the professorial chair of philosophy at Sedan and Rotterdam for several years. We strongly suspect that Bayle's "orthodoxy" is only to be placed on a level with the "confession of faith" made by a still more celebrated countryman of his—we refer to Voltaire. Most probably our Peter was that "terrible animal, the Deist" (as the amiable and polite Addison used to term unbelievers in revelation). In those days there was little or no distinction drawn between the Deists, Atheists, and Freethinkers. They were all infidels alike to the good and faithful. The author of *The Evidences of the Christian Religion* classes them indifferently together as "vermin." Oh, *exemplum exemplorum* of pious intolerance!

Peter Bayle was born November 18, 1647, at Carla, in the county of Foix. For the first eighteen years of his life he studied under his father, who was a Protestant minister in that town. In 1666 Peter went to the University of Puylaurens, where he applied himself with such assiduity to the acquirement of knowledge that the very time set apart for recreation was devoted by the young scholar to his beloved books. He devoured everything that he could lay hands on in the shape of literary matter, the digested mass of erudition being destined to appear thirty years later in the form of the celebrated Dictionary. At this period (as, indeed, in all his after life) Bayle evinced an especial predilection for works of religious controversy. These, however, at this time, only served to raise doubts in his mind as to the truth of the reformed faith. His favorite authors were, we read, Plutarch and Montaigne.

Finding that he was not making sufficient progress at Puylaurens, Bayle soon quitted that place for the University of Toulouse. Here he lodged in the same house as a Catholic priest, with whom he often disputed on the differences between their respective creeds. Being unable to reply to all the subtle objections which were raised against his belief, Bayle imagined that he must be in the wrong. Consequently, he determined to change his religion. This he did to the anger of his bigoted parent, who refused to maintain him any longer. Thus early in his career was poor Peter martyred for his convictions, honestly expressed. Luckily enough, at this juncture a protector was forthcoming in the person of the Catholic Bishop of Rieux, one Bertier. This prelate, being made aware of the young man's unhappy circumstances, volunteered to keep him in the necessaries of life, while finishing his academical career.

"Thus," wrote Bayle, "I was enabled to finish my course of philosophy; I mean that I continued eighteen months at Toulouse, after which, the first impression of education gaining the ascendant, I thought myself obliged to return to the religion in which I was born."

His re-conversion was accomplished in the following manner: A cousin of his, one M. Naudis de Bruguiere, came to Toulouse, and lodged with our author. "They disputed warmly about religion, and, after having pushed the arguments on both sides with great vigor, they used to examine them over again coolly."

These controversies used to greatly puzzle Bayle, who secretly blamed himself for his precipitate haste in embracing Catholicism. In August, 1670, he departed secretly from Toulouse, and retired to Mazares, where he abjured the Roman faith in the presence of several Protestant clerics. He then immediately set out for Geneva, where he obtained a post as tutor. It was afterwards alleged that Peter had taken the Jesuitical habit while at Toulouse before his apostasy, but this charge he was able to refute. It had always been his ambition to go to Paris, and five years later he was enabled to gratify his wish.

Some time after his arrival at this seat of learning the vacancy of a professorship of philosophy occurred at Sedan, and Peter was proposed as a candidate. He succeeded in obtaining the post, despite the fact that his three rival competitors were all natives of that town.

After the closing of the academy in 1681, Bayle returned to Paris. An offer of a professorship of philosophy and history at Rotterdam was accepted by him shortly after.

In 1684 he brought out his *Novelles de la République des Lettres*, which was, as its name implies, a literary journal.

The first volume of the famous Dictionary was brought out in 1665, when it was received with acclamation by the world of letters, and with vilification by the clergy. They assailed him with the titles of atheist and infidel, and demanded the suppression of the work in question.

M. Jurieu, a Protestant divine, and formerly a fellow professor of Bayle, endeavoured to persuade the ecclesiastical assemblies to condemn the book. He wrote a pamphlet on the subject, which he presented to the senate sitting at Delft; but to their everlasting credit let it be recorded that they took no notice of the matter.

A tract was published by the Abbé Renaudot, entitled "The Judgment of the Public, and Particularly of Abbé Renaudot, on Mr. Bayle's Critical Dictionary."

But Peter, in a reply, observed that it should rather be "The Judgment of Abbé Renaudot, with a Commentary by the Publisher," all the rest of the judges being so many phantoms. They are invisible beings, whose colour, whether black or white, we know not, for which reason their testimony is of equal value with a cypher." This same Abbé had also endeavored to ruin one Saurin, an eminent Protestant preacher, against whom he wrote two books, "stuffed full of defamation." In this object he had failed, which should have served as a warning against his attempt on Mr. Bayle. The most amusing part of it was, as Mr. Bayle pointed out in his *tu quoque*, that this Renaudot had himself been gravely censured for having taken "too great a freedom with the dignity of the prophets."

FLORENCE BRADSHAW.

(To be continued.)

MARTYRS AND MARTYRS.

HAD the Arctic trip of Nansen, the explorer, been performed in the interests of religion, and had his sufferings been endured for the good of his soul, it would be only a question of time when he would be called saint instead of doctor. But Valhalla is not for scientific men, and Nansen has made no progress towards canonization. The Arctic region cannot produce saints and martyrs, because it has no heathen population for priests and missionaries to fasten upon, and among whom clerics, too incompetent or too profligate for successful work at home, can lead a lazy existence, sending home such reports of their "labors" as will stimulate the missionary fund and glorify the Church. It is probable that, in comparison with the hardships of explorers in the interest of knowledge and science, the "martyrdoms" of proselyting religionists would pass for very comfortable living, while the balance of good accomplished by the two sets of adventurers is overwhelmingly on the side of the secular advance agents of civilization.

The din maintained by the Church over its self-renouncing adherents drowns the voice of fame that should speak for the martyrs of science. As Max Nordau says, a higher ideal than the increase of general knowledge there cannot be; and he asks: "What saintly legend is as beautiful as the life of an inquirer who spends his existence bending over a microscope, almost without bodily wants, known and honored by few, working only for conscience' sake,

without any other ambition than that perhaps one little new fact may be firmly established, which a more fortunate successor will make use of in a brilliant synthesis, and insert as a stone in some monument of natural science?" If we wish to find martyrs worthy of the name, one profession, that of medicine, will furnish many. We see them every day. It is but a few weeks since Dr. Leich, of Brooklyn, cut himself while removing a cancer, blood-poisoning following, and death resulting. In Bellevue Hospital, New York, there is a memorial tablet on which are inscribed the names of fifteen physicians who have met their death in the course of their profession. Not only this, but there have been cases where physicians have knowingly taken into their systems germs of disease, or poison, simply that they might learn its effects upon the body. A New York hospital physician did this, inoculating himself with what were believed to be the germs of consumption. He took the chance wholly in the interests of the profession, and it cost him his life. Beside such devotion how puerile seems, for example, the abnegation of the Rev. Tom Sherman, whose vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity are paraded in the newspapers before a public to whom it can be of but the least importance whether he has money in his pocket, minds the orders of his superiors, and practises continence, or not. Service to mankind, the increase of knowledge and happiness, is the test; not nature-thwarting vows, be the same violated or kept.

—Truthseeker.

WHITED SEPULCHRES.

THE preacher prayed in a woeful tone
For the thief in the felon's cell,
And told of his punishment here on earth
And his endless days in hell;
But the thief that sat in the best front pew,
That he might be seen and heard—
Of the Shylock thief of the helpless poor
The priest never uttered a word!

And he told of the harlot, steeped in sin,
And the rumseller's awful doom;
And said, if they didn't cease to increase,
Hell would run short of room;
But the pirates that have stolen the earth,
And their brother's blood have shed—
The parson smiled as he winked at them,
And never a word he said.

Lord help the preacher and help the Church
When the morning sun shall rise,
And cast the veil that has hidden the sham
Away from the people's eyes!
And the big thief then, in the best front pew,
And the man with the blood-stained hand,
Shall stand alone in the daylight clear
In sight of all the land.

TICHENOR.

The Church.

Every year, indeed, messengers are sent unto all the world, who, under the protection of the Church, in the most shameless manner, and speculating on the basest side of human nature, preach a crusade against whatever may be called freedom of mind or thought, enlightenment, culture, etc. Yet all these are only the convulsive movements of an antiquated colossus, whose blows even in its death-struggles may indeed be dangerous, but can never gain the victory.—*Dr. F. C. C. L. Büchner, "Force and Matter," preface, p. lxxii.*

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 PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND.

THE initial efforts of the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. to carry the work of propaganda into places in the vicinity of St. Mungo are beginning to bear fruit. For a good many years Glasgow was the only town in the West of Scotland that received a visit from the special lecturers of the National Secular Society; but with the inauguration of Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme we have been enabled to go further afield with a remarkable degree of success. The work has been steadily carried on during the last sixteen months, and the Glasgow "saints" are well pleased at the results. Since the beginning of the year, Messrs. Foote, Cohen, and Watts have each in turn visited Paisley, Greenock, Motherwell, and Dunoon; while Mr. Cohen broke fresh ground at Law, where he had a most successful meeting. Discussion followed most of the lectures, but the polemical skill exhibited was never of a high order. Some of the attempts at discussion, however, afforded no small amount of merriment to the audience. Mr. Cohen also addressed capital meetings at Greenock and Motherwell. At Greenock one opponent discovered that Colonel Ingersoll had fought with the Southern Army on behalf of slavery. When pressed for his authority, he got somewhat muddled, and finally gave the whole case away by stating that Ingersoll behaved in a cowardly manner when captured by the Southern Army. The Motherwell friends turned out in strong force, and Mr. Cohen has established for himself a good reputation in this town. The lecture at Law was in all respects satisfactory, and I take this opportunity to thank our friend there for his zeal in organizing the meeting and carrying out the arrangements so efficiently.

Following closely upon Mr. Cohen's tour, Mr. Watts arrived in Glasgow on February 22. Next evening he commenced his campaign by visiting Paisley, where a large and enthusiastic audience had assembled to hear him lecture. The meetings in this town show a perceptible increase at each visit, and the local branch has taken a new lease of life. The Lecture Scheme was mainly instrumental in bringing about its resuscitation; and, with an energetic committee such as it possesses at present, it should yet accomplish good work for Freethought.

Greenock was next visited. Here we had the finest meeting of Mr. Watts's tour. The audience was a very large and appreciative one, each point made by the lecturer was loudly applauded, and at the close of the lecture Mr. Watts received quite a hurricane of cheers.

Mr. Watts next journeyed to Motherwell, and lectured, by special request, on "Voltaire and Paine." This lecture was intended as a reply to the Rev. Mr. Rentoul, a local minister, who had served up the usual lying stories concerning the lives and death-beds of those two brave Freethinkers. The reverend gentleman was invited to attend, but his cowardice was on a par with his mendacity, and he failed to put in an appearance. The lecture completely vindicated the characters of both, and was followed with the closest attention throughout. The meeting was large and sympathetic. Here, too, progress is being made in the right direction. The last of the series of evening lectures was delivered at Dunoon. The weather was very stormy, and it interfered to a considerable extent with the attendance. Nevertheless, a tolerably good number braved the elements to hear Mr. Watts's discourse on "The Bible and Civilization."

This brought the week's campaign to a close. One gratifying feature in connection with these district lectures is the increased demand at each place visited for Freethought literature. This is bound to help the movement in due course; and, with a continued supply of lectures, we hope yet to establish branches in each of these towns. That the Lecture Scheme is the only method whereby this object can be attained we are fully convinced. We can justly claim to speak authoritatively on its behalf, from the fact that it has been thoroughly tested. Forty-three lectures under Mr. Foote's scheme have now been organized and delivered under the auspices of the Glasgow Branch—a record which we regard with a pardonable amount of pride. We are satisfied that, if properly supported throughout the country, the scheme will be the means of adding numerous recruits to our ranks. The present is an opportune moment to rally our forces. While the present Government proposes to grant theology a fresh endowment we cannot remain idle. The priests of all denominations are preparing for the death grapple, and we must be ready to throw them. Let us, therefore, press on, and never relax our efforts until the banner of Freethought floats proudly over the ruins of theology and superstition. THOMAS MACLEISH.

Farmer—"I hear there was a fire at the manse this morning. Ony serious loss?" Minister—"Yes; ten years' sermons completely destroyed." Farmer—"Mighty me, what a blaze they'd make. They were sae dry, ye ken."

BOOK CHAT.

THE pretension of Maeterlinck to be the Belgian Shakespeare does not say much for the literature of the Low Country. The latest effusion to appear in English is *The Treasure of the Humble*, being ten essays on morality and literature. Belgium has some fine poets. One too little known here is Emile Verhaeren, who occupies a reputation in Brussels similar to that of Paul Verlaine in Paris.

* * *

One of Verhaeren's best-known pieces is the following, entitled "Pieusement"—

La nuit d'hiver élève au ciel son pur calice.
Et je lève mon cœur aussi, mon cœur nocturne,
Seigneur, mon cœur ! vers ton pâle infini vide,
Et néanmoins, je sais que rien n'en pourra l'urne
Comblar, et que rien n'est dont ce cœur meurt avide,
Et je te sais mensonge et mes lèvres te prient
Et mes genoux ; je sais et tes grandes mains closes
Et tes grandes yeux fermés aux désespoirs qui crient,
Et que c'est moi, qui, seul, me rêve dans les choses ;
Sois de pitié, Seigneur ! pour ma toute démençe,
J'ai besoin de pleurer mon mal vers ton silence...
La nuit d'hiver élève au ciel son pur calice.

* * *

The *Sydney Bulletin* called for a translation. The best it got was the following:—

The winter Night her chalice lifts to Heaven.
And I, too, lift my heart, my night-tuned heart,
O Lord, my heart, to thy pale, endless Void,
Though knowing well its cup can by no art
Be filled, and naught it craves when death destroyed :
A lie I know thee, whom my lips beseech,
To whom I bow : thy folded hands I see,
Thy great eyes closed 'gainst all despairing speech.
'Tis I who dream myself into infinity.
On all my madness, Lord ! O shed thy balm :
I needs must weep my trouble to thy calm...
The winter Night her chalice lifts to Heaven.

It has, however, already been very well rendered by Osman Edwards, as under:—

The winter lifts its chalice of pure night to Heaven.
And I uplift my heart, my night-worn heart, in turn,
O Lord, my heart ! to thy pale, infinite Inane,
And yet I know that naught the impenishable urn
May plnish, that naught is, whereof this heart dies fain,
And I know thee a lie, and with my lips make prayer
And with my knees : I know thy great, shut hands averse,
Thy great eyes closed, to all the clamors of despair ;
It is I, who dream myself into the universe ;
Have pity on my wandering wits' entire discord ;
Needs must I weep my woe towards thy silence, Lord !
The winter lifts its chalice of pure night to heaven.

* * *

No. 8 of "Papers for the People," by J. M. Robertson, is entitled "The Truth About Vaccination." It was by reading a pamphlet with this title by Dr. Ernest Hart that Mr. Robertson was led to think that vaccination does not carry with it the immunity from small-pox which is pretended. He certainly presents a weighty case against the practice.

* * *

The *Church Times*, noticing Maspero's *Struggle of the Nations*, says: "M. Maspero, as his readers know, is committed to the Higher Criticism to a degree that probably the majority of the clients of the S.P.C.K. would disapprove of; but, at all events, his opinions on this head do not appear in this volume, except here and there in the notes." We suppose the editor did not think it worth while doctoring the notes.

* * *

The work by the late Sir Richard Burton on *Human Sacrifice among the Sephardim or Eastern Jews*, which is about to be published by Messrs. Hutchinson, has been, it is said, long delayed on account of its strong anti-Semitic tendency. It includes a general study of the Jewish race as found in all countries.

We have to record the death, on March 6, at the advanced age of eighty-seven, of Dr. Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, the author of a large number of popular school books and guides to science and history. Among his more important works were *A Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, *A Historic Note-Book*, and *A Dictionary of Miracles*. The last work was sufficient to proclaim him a Freethinker. To a small circle he was known as the author of some able pamphlets, such as replies to the Christian Evidence Society, *The Pillars of the Church*, *Natural Reason v. Divine Revelation*, *The Old and New Testament Examined*, etc. Dr. Brewer was an omnivorous reader and collector of facts, and for many years was editor-in-chief at Cassell's. He was personally commissioned by Napoleon III. to adapt his popular *Guide to Science* to the needs of French children. He was, too, for a time joint editor, with his brother, of the *Morning Herald*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WOMAN'S WORK IN THE SECULAR MOVEMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am only a woman, not even a new woman; but, being a Secularist, I cannot fall in with the idea, "Let your women learn in silence." The time has now come when woman must be heard. Nearly every great movement that has ever been inaugurated for the purpose of making this world a pleasanter and more comfortable abode for man has had among its originators the voice of woman. Secularism, having raised woman to her true position in society (that of being man's equal, not his chattel or slave, as taught by Christianity), expects every woman, who has embraced that freedom and liberty which it offers, to spread the light so that her Christian sister may embrace them also. Now the question arises, What can woman do in the cause? Well, to my mind, there are many ways open to her which are shut to man. She has the power of instilling into the minds of the little ones the great moral law, *To do right because it is right*; she can teach them, in language which they will understand, the great and unquestioned truths of nature, and save them in after life from the pangs which some of us have had to endure in throwing off the false teachings of a Christian childhood. Then there is the Sunday-school, which every branch should organize, for it is quite as necessary to provide a place of instruction and amusement for the little ones as it is to provide the older ones with lectures. In my opinion, if the women of the party received more encouragement to work in their midst, there would be plenty of willing hands ready to volunteer for this work, and I am sure there are many of our lecturers who would willingly give their services on a Sunday afternoon, if necessary, to this very important work. Now that the question of religious instruction is agitating the minds of the people, the time has come when Secularists should move in the matter. Let us teach the little ones what we *know* to be the truth, always remembering that—

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And all the beauteous land.

Yours for the little Secularists,

SARAH A. THOMSON.

ANCILLA DOMINUSQUE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have read with much attention Mr. Wheeler's article on the passage from Pliny. It seems to me that the writer has fallen into one or two errors. In the first place, he appears to labor under some strange misapprehension as to the meaning of the word "ancilla."

Mr. Wheeler has quoted the sentence, "*duabus ancillis, quæ ministræ dicebantur*," from the "Christian evidence" letter, giving its translation as "two maid-servants, who were called ministers." He then remarks (as a piece of strong testimony in favor of the forgery of the tenth book) that Paul "did not suffer young women to be deaconesses."

Longolius has quoted an authority to show that the word "ministræ" should here be rendered "deaconesses." But Henley has translated the passage, "two maids, which waited upon them." The word "ancille" was applied to waiting-women and female captives, altogether irrespective of age. Pliny's two slaves might therefore have attained the ripe years which would qualify them for their office (assuming that "deaconesses" are here meant).

As regards the word "*dominus*": Mr. Wheeler writes that this was a title unused by Roman princes. The statement is incorrect. It is true that Augustus and Tiberius would not allow themselves to be so addressed, but it was because the word came to mean "tyrant." It was generally used for a slave-owner or ruler. Suetonius relates of the Emperor Domitian that "he was not a little pleased to hear the people cry out in the amphitheatre upon a fast-day, 'All happiness to our Lord and Lady'" (*Domino et dominæ feliciter*); and continues: "With the like arrogance, when he dictated the form of a letter to be used by his procurators, he began it thus: 'Our Lord and God commands so and so'; from which it became a custom to style him constantly in the same manner, both in writing and conversation." It appears, indeed, to have been frequently used as an adulatory form of address bestowed upon the Roman emperors.

Martial, in praise of the virtuous Trajan, wrote: "Flatterers, in vain do you come to me, miserable objects, with prostituted lips! I am not about to celebrate a *Lord* or a *God*; there is now no longer any abode for you in this city.....Here there is no *Lord*, but an Emperor..... Under this prince, Rome, if thou art discreet, beware of speaking in the language used to his predecessors."

What does this imply? It is to be remembered that the

poet (the gross flatterer of Domitian) found, to his cost, that such fulsome praise as he gave to his deceased patron was positively distasteful to the successor of Domitian? *Dominus* was, too, used as a title of civility. Among the titles given to the Emperor Justinian in the Pandects occurs that of "*Dominus noster sacratissimus princeps*."

Finally, let Hoffman be quoted. "*Dominus*," he wrote, "*appellatio fuit, quæ Imperatores olim insigniebantur, Alexandro tamen Severo eam repudiante; quemadmodum et Augustæ, seu uxores earum, Dominæ dicte sunt*"—which means, "*Dominus* was the word applied to designate the Emperors. Alexander Severus, however, repudiated this title. On this account the Augustas were called *Dominæ*."

Let me, in conclusion, cite from Suetonius, to show that religious persecution was not entirely known among the Romans: "He (Tiberius) suppressed all foreign religions, the Egyptian and Jewish rites of worship, obliging all such as were engaged in that kind of superstition to burn their holy vestments and all their religious furniture. The Jews he disposed of under pretence of their serving in the wars, in provinces of an unhealthy air, and banished from the city all the rest of that nation, or proselytes to that religion, under a penalty of being condemned to slavery for life if they did not comply with his orders."

Lastly, Mr. Wheeler demands: "How came it that, when in Bithynia, Pliny never thought of writing to his friends or clients, but only to his prince?" Might it not, in reply, be suggested that the tenth book was intentionally devoted to this correspondence between Pliny and his prince? The late recovery of the MS. is by no means a conclusive proof of its non-genuineness.

FLORENCE BRADSHAW.

PROFANE JOKES.

THE celebrated Dr. Strong, of Hartford, preached some time in a neighboring village. One day a committee called upon him to settle with him for his service, and, after stammering a while, signified to him that his further services were not desired. "What does this mean, gentlemen?" asked the doctor. "Why," replied the spokesman, with some hesitation, "the people have got the impression that you are inclining to universal salvation." "Gentlemen," answered the doctor, "I never have preached that doctrine; but, if I ever should, I promise to make the people of this town an exception."

Rev. Dr. West, of New Bedford, Mass., once heard that his choir would refuse to sing on the next Sunday. When the day came he gave out the hymn, "Come ye who love the Lord." After reading it through, he looked up very emphatically at the choir, and said, "You will begin at the second verse, 'Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God.'" The choir sang.

"Darling, did you sing any pretty songs at Sunday-school?" "Yes, mamma; we sang a lovely one about Greenland's ice-cream mountains."

Clarence—"How did people cipher before slates were invented?" Father—"The Bible says, my son, that people multiplied on the face of the earth."

The vicar was examining the class in religion. "Well, Johnny," he asked, "can you tell me what St. Paul was?" Johnny looked staggered, and scratched his head in vain. The vicar, noticing the boy's dilemma, began to prompt him by saying: "St. Paul was an apo—, apo—" To which the urchin immediately added: "Please, sir, St. Paul was an apothecary!" Feeling somewhat disconcerted, the vicar passed on to another boy, and asked him if he knew out of what God had created the world? This boy also got stuck, and the good-natured vicar, in order to freshen the boy's memory, said: "Don't get flurried, my young friend; think; God created the world out of a ka—, ka—" "Oh, I know now," put in the boy, with a great deal of self-possession; "God made the world out of a cow!"

One of the most noted and popular clergymen in London was a few Sundays ago going up the steps of his church, when he was asked by an old blind lady, who, of course, did not know him, to help her up the steps. With his usual good grace he complied with her request. Just then, on reaching the top, she asked him who was going to preach. "The Reverend Mr. Jones," he replied, that being his own name. "Oh, Lord!" exclaimed the old lady, "help me down again; I'd rather listen to a man sharpening a saw." At first he was inclined to refuse; but then he gently helped her down, remarking, as he reached the bottom: "You are quite right, madam; I would not go in either, if I was not paid for it."

A little girl asked her father the other day what bigamy was. "My dear," he replied, "it is a man marrying again when his wife is alive." "Then will a man go to heaven who commits bigamy?" "No, my child." "Then our minister will not go to heaven?" "Oh, yes, my child; his wife is dead." "But, papa, it says on her tombstone, 'She is not dead, but sleepeth.'"

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.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, O. Watts, "The Christians' Last Attempt to Rescue the Bible."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, R. Forder, "The Bible and the Child."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, H. P. Ward, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, Miss Hope Rea, "Our Movement: Its Direction."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Athenæum, Camden-road, N.W.: 7, F. J. Gould, "The Greater Self."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL, Leighton Hall, Kentish Town: 11, Lesson by F. J. Gould. Children invited.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, R. Washington Sullivan, "Socrates."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Stuart Mill."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, R. P. Edwards will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (St. James's Hall): C. Cohen—11, "Foreign Missions"; 3, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 7, "Origin of Man." March 16 and 17, Debate between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee.
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Stanley Jones, "The Right Hon. Arthur James Balfour: Philosopher and Politician."
DERBY (Athenæum, Victoria-street): G. W. Foote—11, "The Crescent and the Cross in Crete"; 3, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible"; 7, "The Doom of the Gods."
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—J. Gilbert, "Ibsen's Ghosts"; 6.30, Social Meeting.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A lecture
LEEDS (Compton's Hotel, Briggate): 7, J. G. Fisher, "Land Nationalization Inconsistent with Liberty."
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. W. Baylis, B.A., "Some Objections to State Socialism."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Simpson, "State Socialism and Social Degeneration."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Readings from a young local novelist.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, "Federation and Organization."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—March 15 to 21, Manchester; 23, Bradford.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—April 4, m., Hyde Park a., Harrow-road; e., Hammersmith.

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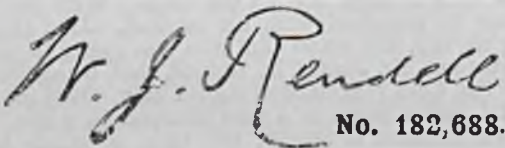
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