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The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

GOD DEFEND THE RIGHT.

OUR gallant little contemporary, the London *Star*, seems to have lost its head over the Cretan question, or else to have handed over its editorship for a time to a committee of Nonconformist ministers. Its leading article on Monday evening was like a last word before Armageddon. After expressing the extraordinary hope that the Greeks would fight and die to the last man—which is a very cheerful prospect for the Greek women, unless “the *Star* man” means to marry the lot of them afterwards—the writer went on to say that, on the very eve of revolution, his cry was, “God defend the right!”

We did not expect these pious hysterics from the *Star*. And we regret the disorder the more deeply because our contemporary now boasts of being the only halfpenny Liberal evening paper in London. The screaming representatives of the Nonconformist Conscience are apt to spoil the sense and temper of those who associate with them. For our part, we have no desire to see the last male Greek, who is old enough to carry arms, have a premature and unnecessary funeral. We do not want to see the Greeks fight at all. We wish to see the Cretan question settled without bloodshed. In any case, we have not the slightest faith in the Providence to which the *Star* appeals in its editorial extremity. It is easy to cry, “God defend the right!” But did our contemporary ever find that personage doing anything of the kind? Prayers went up from most of the churches in Christendom on behalf of the Armenians, and Abdul the Damned went on slaughtering with perfect equanimity and unmitigated success. God did not save the life of a single Armenian man, or the honor of a single Armenian woman. Why, then, should it be expected that he will do wonderful things for the Greeks? The Armenians are Christians, and are the Greeks any more? What is the point of difference on which our contemporary makes its confident appeal to Heaven?

When people have to call on God they are in a sorry plight. Everybody knows that when a man says “God help you,” it is all up with you. You have simply to take it lying down. The *Star*'s exclamation is really the very best reason why the Greeks should get out of their trouble as quickly as possible.

Napoleon said that Providence was always on the side of the biggest battalions, and Napoleon knew what he was talking about when it came to fighting. He was a higher authority on such matters than the *Star*. It seems to us that it would take a tremendous quantity of Providence to put Greece on a fighting level with all the rest of Europe. Perhaps our contemporary will tell us how many centuries of prayer it would take to put one ironclad on a fighting level with twenty, or one soldier on a fighting level with a hundred. The age of miracles may not be past, but the odds are enormous against one happening when you want it. And even if Providence does intervene, how can anyone tell that it will be on the right side? There does not appear

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to be the least justification for the belief that any supernatural power regulates the affairs of this world, even to the smallest extent, on the principles of equity. Truth and justice have always been defeated when falsehood and injustice were stronger. All the Nonconformists, pray they never so mightily, cannot defeat the Voluntary Schools Bill. The most strenuous efforts of their piety do not make the smallest impression on Mr. Balfour's majority. And if Providence does not assist their cause in England why should we believe that it will promote the realization of their wishes in the East of Europe? Are we to conclude that Providence, unlike gravitation, acts with increasing intensity according to the square of the distance?

We hope our esteemed contemporary, which has done so much good work for the cause of progress, will speedily recover from this attack of religious enthusiasm, and return to the rational and temperate discussion of political problems. Zeal is an excellent thing, but it should be tempered with discretion. Earnestness is valuable, but it should be allied with common sense. Let the religious journals traffic in pious sentimentalities. A paper like the *Star* should avoid the cant of pulpits and prayer-meetings, and address itself to our intelligence. It should also recollect that appealing to God is the last refuge of helplessness.

G. W. FOOTE.

MARTIN LUTHER.*

THERE is an abundance of literature on Luther, yet the Open Court Publishing Company has done decidedly well by translating the account of the hero of the Reformation, by Gustav Freytag, for the benefit of English readers. For Freytag has, in addition to competent knowledge of his subject, considerable skill in presenting it. So many German works are distinguished by an embarrassment of erudition that it is refreshing to find one who puts aside surplusage, and takes you into the heart of the matter. Freytag is, of course, full of sympathy with his national hero. He glances but lightly at his faults of temper, has nothing to say of his attitude towards science—he called Copernicus an old fool—and defends his opposition to the democratic aspirations of the Peasants' War. None the less, he contrives to give in brief compass a vivid picture of the man and of his work, which is the main thing.

Luther was essentially a man of action. His voluminous writings are the sputterings forth of a man surfeited rather with emotional energy than with rational thought. There was nothing original in what he had to say about the traffic in indulgences. Everyone knew that Tetzels was maintaining priestly abuse. What was original in Luther was his action in drawing attention to the abuse, and his determination not to be put down. When he saw some of the consequences of asserting the rights of private judgment

* *Martin Luther*. By Gustav Freytag. Translated by Henry G. O. Heineman. (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co.; London: 17, Johnson's-court; 1897.)

and conscience, he clung as in desperation to his fetish book, and denounced in unmeasured terms the peasants who desired freedom from their oppressors.

Despite his limitations, we cannot but admire the honesty, energy, and courage of the man. When cited to appear before the Emperor at the Diet of Worms, few thought he would go, fewer still that he would not recant. But he had the backbone of a hero. "Were there as many devils in Worms as there are roof tiles, I would go." When before the assembly, he said: "Yesterday I was admonished earnestly to reflect that discord, riot, and rebellion may grow out of my teachings in the world. I have considered, and weighed it sufficiently. In truth, it is most joyful for me to see that on account of the divine word there will be dissension in the world, for that is the consequence and the fate which is prepared by the Word of God. The Lord himself said: 'I came not to send peace, but a sword, for I am come to set a man at variance against his father.' Let us beware, therefore, lest we condemn the Word of God, under the pretext of adjusting the quarrels of parties, that a flood of insufferable evil may not come over us, and lest the noble youth, Emperor Charles, have an unhappy beginning of his reign. I say this not as though my teaching and warning was needed by such great heads, but because I owe it to my native land to do her this service." Pressed to recant, he said: "Unless I am overcome with the testimony of the Scripture, or with clear and transparent reasons, I will and shall not recant a single word, for it is wicked and dangerous to act contrary to conscience"; and finally exclaimed, in German: "Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders, Gott helfe mir, Amen." All our dissatisfactions with the bigotry and superstitions of the man are lost when remembering that scene. Freytag says: "It was the first and only time, too, in German history, that a man from the people so firmly defended, in peril of death, the demands of his conscience before the Emperor and the Diet. The effect of his steadfastness upon the princes was great, immeasurably great upon the people. Outlawed, cursed, persecuted by Pope and Emperor, by princes and prelates, four years suffice to make him the idolized hero of the people. His journey to Worms is described in the style of the Scripture, and the over-zealous compare him to the martyrs of the New Testament."

Scarcely less powerful, if not so dramatic, was Luther's practical assault upon the doctrine of celibacy by marrying Catharine von Bora, who had been a nun. It may not be correct that Martin Luther said the words most frequently attributed to him, those, namely, in Mùchler's drinking chorus:—

Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib, und Gesang
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Lebenlang.

(Who loves not woman, wine, and song
Remains a fool his whole life long.)

But assuredly a splendid example of the superiority of secular happiness to religious asceticism was given when the portly, excommunicated monk espoused the buxom, runaway bride of Christ.

In controversy Luther employed no delicate rapier, but a coarse bludgeon. His style, as Voltaire said of the *curé* Meslier, was that of a carthorse; but his kicks were formidable. He did not scruple to call his opponents beasts, fools, liars, and rogues, instigated by the Devil. Some of his choicest vocabulary was bestowed on our own defender of the faith, Henry VIII. The Pope, the legates, and their courtesans were represented with harsh humor in wood-cuts by his friend, Lucas Cranach, contrasting the humility of the suffering Christ with the splendor of the clergy. And the clergy retorted in turn. It was commonly said Luther had been misbegotten by an incubus. His own accounts of dealings with the Devil were numerous.

Freytag says: "From his childhood he knew how busily the evil spirits hover about man; from scripture he had learned that the Devil works upon the purest, to destroy them. In his youth he had been tormented by apparitions; now they returned. Out of the dark shadow of his study the spectre of the tempter raised its claws against his reason; even in the form of the Savior did the Devil approach the praying man, radiant as the Prince of heaven with five wounds, as the old Church pictured Him. But Luther knew that Christ appears to poor mortals only in His words, or in such humble form as He hung on the Cross. And he gathered himself up indignantly, and cried

out to the apparition, 'Get thee gone, thou blaspheming Devil,' and the apparition vanished."

Everyone has heard of Luther throwing his inkpot at the Devil. Freytag says: "The ink-spot in the Wartburg is not sufficiently authenticated, but Luther did tell of a disagreeable noise which Satan made at that place by night with a bag of hazel nuts." He had many bouts with the adversary, and often complains of the terrors of these struggles which the Devil caused him. "He never was so fearful and angry from the beginning, as he is now at the end, of the world. I feel him very plainly. He sleeps closer to me than my Katie—that is, he gives me more unrest than she does joy." It is sometimes extremely inconvenient to keep an actual Devil, but with Luther this was the necessary consequence of keeping an actual God.

Macaulay pointed out that the Lutheran Reformation never extended much beyond the bounds it assumed in Luther's own century. He lived to witness its greatest triumphs. He was the sower, and he was also the reaper. There are many converts from Catholicism in Catholic countries; but they do not go over to Lutherism, but to Freethought. The compromise of fissiparous Protestantism is breaking up. Its bulwark of the Bible has been undermined. The newer Reformation makes clear the issue between Reason and Authority. Those who fall back on faith find their safety in the Church of Rome. Those prepared for the bracing air of freedom will examine and reject the words of an old book as those of a living man. The only temple that can be erected on the foundation of private judgment is a Freethought one.

It should be mentioned that the book is excellently got up. There are a number of illustrations, including good portraits of Luther, Luther's wife, Melancthon, Leo X., Erasmus, and Frederic, the Elector of Saxony.

J. M. WHEELER.

WAR AND RELIGIOUS FANATICISM.

PERSONALLY, I am opposed to all war except that which is necessary for defensive purposes. Of course, it is the duty of every man to protect his home and country from foreign interference and invasion, for these should be endeared to him by the ties of birth and family associations. And to make war upon the inhabitants of other nations is to do to them the very thing that we should object to their doing unto us. Besides, the reality of war is so brutal in its nature and so disastrous in its results that the very thought of it should fill the calm and humane mind with the greatest horror. When I think of the sad and degrading consequences of military conflicts between nations, the physical agony they produce, the lives they destroy, the homes they wreck, the widows and orphans they make, and the general misery and desolation that follow their operations, my humanity prevents me from assenting to such a low and debased mode of gratifying the worst passions of human nature.

Aggressive wars are the more to be deplored, inasmuch as those who are compelled to fight in them have nothing to gain, but all to lose. They have not even the pretence of revenge—mean and undignified as that passion appears to me to be. Military renown, which is comparatively rare among the rank and file of the armies, is but a poor compensation for the sacrifice of personal independence, and the enforced practice of the inferior passions of our nature. The men who engage in battle are but instruments used by others, either to gratify their unhealthy ambition or to increase their misused power. And what is the reward received by many of these victims of cruel warfare? A lingering or sudden death upon the battlefield, or a shattered and broken-down constitution, with an old age spent in poverty. Unfortunately, instead of the chances of war diminishing, they are increasing, as the present military fever in Europe amply testifies. Where do the blessings of Christianity come in? With all its power and resources under the banner of the "Prince of Peace," it has failed to lessen the strife of warfare, which is a curse to the nation and an impediment to the progress and happiness of the people.

There is no doubt, in my mind, that fanaticism of some kind lies at the root of most of the wars that have devastated the world. By fanaticism is here meant uncontrolled enthusiasm, unregulated passion, perverted emotion,

As Herbert Spencer observes in his *Study of Sociology*: "Excited feelings make us wrongly estimate probability; and they make us also wrongly estimate importance." But it is the fanaticism of religion that has been the most prolific source of war, for the simple reason that it furnishes its victims with the strongest incentive to fight for whatever they deem in accordance with the "will of God." It was this spirit of fanaticism, say Dr. Dick in his *Philosophy of Religion*, that produced the civil wars of France in the beginning of the seventeenth century, when "above a million of men lost their lives, and nine cities, four hundred villages, two thousand churches, two thousand monasteries, and ten thousand houses were burned or destroyed, besides the many thousands of men, women, and children that were cruelly butchered; and 150,000,000 livres were spent in carrying forward these slaughters and devastations" (p. 362). Earl Russell, in his *History of Religion*, speaking of the Albigensian War, writes: "Neither sex nor age was spared. From twenty to fifty thousand persons were slain. The cruel command was uttered—'Slay them all; God will know his own.' The Monk of Vaux Cernay, the historian of these atrocities, says: 'Our people put to the sword all whom they could find, slaying them with fire and sword. For which blessed be the Lord, who delivers to us some of the wicked, though not all'" (pp. 144-5). And, according to Carlyle, it was the same religious fanaticism that governed the contests between Cromwell and the Covenanters. Both parties fought under the impression that they were supported by "Divine approval," and that they were the people of God. It is the one drawback that I recognize in the great character of one of the noblest of England's sons (which undoubtedly Cromwell was), that he yielded too much to the influence of religious fanaticism. When he overthrew the Scotch, and "had the execution of them," he called it "a sweet mercy," vouchsafed to him by God, to whom he devoutly ascribed the glory. After mentioning his victory at Dunbar, where there were about "three thousand Scotch slain," he added: "It is easy to say the Lord hath done this." From these few instances, among many that could be cited, of the influence of religious fanaticism, it will be seen what a powerful incentive this passion has been in the promotion and in the carrying on of war.

Without in any way referring to the political aspect of the crisis in the East, in my opinion the cause of the whole trouble can be traced to religious fanaticism. Had the Secular principle been observed of allowing freedom of opinion, in all probability nothing would have been heard of atrocities in Armenia or in Crete. That the Turks, goaded on by the fanaticism of their religion, have acted in a most cruel and revolting manner towards the Christians is, alas! too true. And it would be to me a source of extreme gratification if their power for evil were entirely destroyed. But the reader must not infer, as the Christians of this country, who are also suffering from the fever of fanaticism, appear to do, that the Turks are the only criminals in human slaughter. It would be, indeed, easy to show from history that under the shadow of the Cross more blood has been shed, and more lives have been sacrificed, than ever occurred under the sway of the Crescent. Those who doubt my statement should study carefully Mr. Foote's admirable article which appeared in the *Freethinker* of February 28. Therein is given ample evidence to justify my allegation. To sympathize with the victims of the horrible cruelties which have been going on of late in the East is a commendable ebullition of feeling, and one which all Secularists will share; and if it were in their power, they would prevent the possibility of their recurrence. Still, I feel bound to state that, if the unfortunate victims had not been what are called Christians, much of the sympathy manifested in the Churches would not have been heard of. This boisterous outlet of compassion for the Armenians and the Cretans, which has been recently going on among the various religious congregations, has, to my mind, more the air of a family grief than an impartial commiseration for the sufferings of general humanity.

One peculiar feature of this agitation upon the part of the Christians, in reference to the affairs in the East, is that, if their faith is true, mundane creatures are not alone to blame. The question may be fairly put: If their God exist, why has he allowed such dreadful calamities to occur? No good man, who had the power to prevent them, would have done so. This thought evidently struck

Canon Gore, who, in his sermon at Westminster Abbey on Sunday, February 14, in referring to the terrible miseries in India, Armenia, and Crete, said: "There are sensitive spirits to whom these things have been the cause of their altogether abandoning their Christian faith. They looked at Christian Europe, with its incomparable, almost omnipotence of fleets and armies, sitting there and wrangling, and doing nothing, because they were mutually jealous; and they said: 'How can these things be in the world if there is any God?' And he adds: 'There is more faith in that sort of disbelief than in the smug and calm orthodoxy which sits in its pew, and cares and troubles no more than if it was a mere passing disquietude in domestic politics.'" The *Rock* of March 5 says that "God will again use the jealousies of the nations to work out his own plans in his own time." This, however, is presenting a very low estimate of God, and shows that he lacks ordinary wisdom and the better instincts of humanity. If he were wise, he would know that the sooner these troubles come to an end, the better for the welfare of the human family; and if he were a loving being, he would not employ the weakness of jealousy, which he must, if he is all-wise, be aware in this case causes so much cruelty, suffering, and injustice, to accomplish an end that he could readily achieve by just and merciful means. No wonder that, in the presence of such stern realities, which are said to take place under a "divine government," people are "altogether abandoning their Christian faith."

It would seem that Christians themselves are not quite satisfied with the action, or the non-action, of their God, for the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches has just passed a resolution "praying that God will so guide the deliberations of statesmen and order the events as that the freedom of the Cretan and other Christian populations may be secured without further bloodshed." Now, if God be the ruler of all things, is not such a supplication as this impertinent? Does not the very appeal to God assume that man knows better than he what is right and necessary? Moreover, if the Bible may be relied upon, all prayer of supplication is useless. For we read, "God knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalm xlv. 21), that "he doeth according to his will" (Daniel iv. 35), and that "I change not" (Malachi iii. 6). If this be true, to ask him to alter his course is an utter waste of time. The Christian, to be consistent, should submit, and exclaim to his God, "Thy will be done."

Not so with us. As Secularists, we have no belief in a God who can, yet will not, save the world from the horrors and perplexities that now darken the Eastern hemisphere. Neither do we humiliate ourselves by asking any God to do that which experience proves can be accomplished only by material means. The secret of all success in securing a state of amity and goodwill, both individually and nationally, is to avoid fanaticism, and, above all, religious fanaticism, and to maintain a calm judgment, regulated by cultivated reason. By so doing, justice will be the better recognized, love will be a more active principle than it is, and the true brotherhood of man will have a fair opportunity of being established, regardless of country, race, or creed.

CHARLES WATTS.

PETER BAYLE—LIBRE-PENSEUR.

(Continued from page 171.)

JURIEU made another effort with the courts in 1698. He succeeded in getting them to exhort Bayle to be more "cautious" in his next edition.

We read in the author's narration of the affair that, "on account of the many complaints made by many persons everywhere," the Consistory of Rotterdam considered it incumbent on them to take cognizance of the much-abused Dictionary. They accordingly appointed commissioners to examine it. The author was summoned before them, when their objections were stated as follows:—(1) That certain quotations were calculated to offend chaste ears; (2) Objection was taken to the articles on David, the Manichees, and the Sceptics; (3) Exorbitant praise was bestowed on persons who denied God's existence or his providence; (4) That where Mr. Bayle treated of Providence he exaggerated the objections of the profane and infidels.

Bayle having promised to amend certain articles specified by the judges, they expressed themselves satisfied with the Dictionary, of which a second edition was brought out in 1702.

The much-slandered author revenged himself (and the revenge was more than proportionate to the offence) by publishing an explanation of, and answer to, the charges brought by the pious against him. The reply was a masterpiece in the art of irony, and shows that Peter must have been an accomplished satirist. The interfering divines must have doubly winced at this triumphant rejoinder, which exposed the pretensions of Christianity far more adequately than any passages in the Dictionary itself.

He had been accused of placing the arguments of the Manichees in the strongest possible light, instead of replying thereto. Wrote the wily infidel: "Those who have taken offence at certain particulars I observed in the articles where I treated of Manicheism would be entirely inexcusable if they grounded their assertions on my saying that the question concerning the origin of evil cannot be accounted for *without the utmost difficulty*; for this the ancient Fathers have confessed frankly, and there is no orthodox divine at this day but what would own the same thing. I therefore believe that it was not this which proved the stumbling-block; and I am persuaded that it consisted in my asserting that the objections of the Manichees are unanswerable so long as they are examined only before the tribunal of reason....."

"The Gospel mysteries are *above reason*. It results necessarily from thence that it is impossible to solve the difficulties raised by philosophers, and consequently that a controversy in which *reason only* is employed will always prove disadvantageous to divines, and that these will be forced to give ground, and to take shelter under the canon of *supernatural light*. It is plain," continued the sardonic Bayle, "that *reason* can never attain to what is *above* it; but if it could furnish answers to the objections which oppose the doctrine of the Trinity and that of the hypostatic union, it consequently would reach those two mysteries; it would subject, turn, and wind them, even to the comparing them with its first principles, or such aphorisms as arise from common notions, and till it had at last concluded that they agree with reason. It therefore would exert itself beyond its strength, and would soar above the bounds set to its limits, which is a downright contradiction! It therefore is not able to find out answers to its own objections, and consequently they remain victorious, so long as we have not recourse to the authority of God, and the necessity of subjecting the understanding to faith."

Oh, Peter, Peter! how your adversaries must have writhed! But there is more to come, which is too good to miss transcribing here. "A temper, fond of disputing," continued Bayle, "is what seems to be least approved under the Gospel dispensation. The first thing Christ ordains is *faith* and *submission*..... Now, this faith he required was not obtained by a train of philosophical inquiries, and a long series of arguments; *it was a gift of God*, a pure grace of the Holy Ghost, and which commonly descended only on ignorant persons. If Christ and his apostles descended sometimes to *reasoning*, they had not recourse to *reason* for their proofs, but to the books of the Prophets and to miracles; and if St. Paul employed, at any time, some argument *ad hominem* against the Gentiles, he did not insist upon it much. His method was entirely different from that of the philosophers. These boast their having such evident principles, and a system so consistent, that they were never afraid of meeting with any obstacles to persuasion, except the stupidity of their auditors, or the artful malice of their rivals; and they offer to give the reasons of their doctrine to all men, and to assert it in opposition to all gainsayers. St. Paul, on the contrary, owns that his doctrine is obscure, that he knows it but imperfectly, and that no part of it can be understood except God communicates a spiritual discernment, without which it must be considered as foolishness. He acknowledges that most persons whom the apostles converted were of mean condition and ignorant. He does not challenge philosophers to dispute with him, but exhorts the faithful to beware very carefully of philosophy, and shun the contests of that science, which had destroyed the faith of some persons (Colossians ii. 8; 1 Timothy vi. 20, 21). If one of the apostles—St. Paul, for instance—when among the Athenians, had besought the Areopagus to permit him to

enter the lists against all philosophers; had he offered to maintain a disputation upon the Three Persons who are but one God; on the hypostatic union of the divine nature, and of the human nature in Jesus Christ; and if, before he began the disputation, he had acknowledged the truth of the rules laid down by Aristotle in his *Logic*..... the Athenian philosophers must have gained a complete victory; for he would have been judged and condemned agreeably to the maxims, the truth of which he had acknowledged before..... Predestination is one of those *mysteries* which most confound man's reason, and which most absolutely require it to submit to the authority of God, and to sacrifice its powers to Scripture..... The doctrine of original sin, and the eternal damnation of a numberless multitude of people..... are most incomprehensible, and necessarily require our submission to the *revealed truth*, notwithstanding all the opposition of philosophical truth."

Regarding the objection made to the "exorbitant praise" given to Atheists, Peter Bayle had some scathing remarks to make. With ironical humility he pleaded that he had taken care to mention, *as often as he found opportunity*, the bad morals of Atheists. "If," wrote Bayle, "these examples are not more numerous, the reason was my wanting materials for that purpose. The public knows very well that I desired to have such examples pointed out to me; but no one has taken the pains to do this, and I have not yet been able to make any discoveries by my researches." He commented on the fact that among "the great number of criminals dispatched by the executioner none are found Atheists. The ecclesiastics, who prepare them for death, find them always sufficiently disposed to wish for the joys of Paradise." He observed that the love and fear of the deity are not the sole spring of human actions. However, he pointed out that, although he spoke of the *good morals* of some Atheists, he had never ascribed any *real virtues* to them. Indeed, with St. Austin, he regarded good qualities and actions in *Atheists* but as so many *splendid sins* (*splendida peccata*)! "I take it for granted," declared the sarcastic author of the Dictionary, "as an undoubted and fully-determined point, that there not only is more virtue in true religion than can be found in any other, but that there cannot be any true virtue, nor any fruits of righteousness, out of that religion."

Bayle touched further on the subject of the principal incentives to human conduct: "A thirst after glory, the fear of infamy, of death, or of torments, the hopes of a post, act more forcibly on some men than a desire of pleasing God and the fear of violating his commandments! Any person who doubts of this is unacquainted with part of his actions, and knows nothing of what passes daily in the world..... Persons daily subscribe formularies of faith in opposition to the dictates of their conscience to save their estates, or escape a prison, banishment, death, etc. A military man, who has forsaken all things for the sake of his religion, and sees himself reduced to this dilemma—either of offending God if he takes revenge for a blow he had received, or to pass for a coward in case he does not take vengeance—is not easy till he has had satisfaction for this affront, at the hazard even of killing, or of being killed, in a state which will be followed by eternal damnation. It is not probable that anyone should be so stupid as not to be acquainted with such incidents. The following aphorism of morality may therefore be ranked among the uncontroverted truths: *The fear and love of the deity are not always the principle that impels most strongly the actions of mankind.*"

Our sceptic thence draws the following conclusions: (1) That it is the property of gospel mysteries to be liable to such objections as cannot be solved by natural light of reason; (2) that unbelievers cannot justly draw any advantage from this—viz., because the maxims of philosophy cannot solve the difficulties raised by them against the gospel mysteries; (3) that the objections of the Manichees with respect to the origin of evil and predestination ought not to be considered in general as combatting predestination; but with this particular regard, that the origin of evil, the decrees of God thereupon, etc., form one of the most incomprehensible mysteries of Christianity; (4) that every Christian ought to be satisfied with this—that his faith is grounded on the testimony of God's word; (5) that the Manichee system, considered in itself, is absurd, indefensible, or repugnant to regularity and order; that it is liable to be retorted, and cannot remove the difficulties;

(6) that, at all events, no person ought to take offence at my concessions without, at the same time, being offended at the doctrine of the most orthodox divines, since whatever I have advanced results naturally and unavoidably from their sentiments, and since I have only related, in a more prolix manner, what they have taught more concisely."

FLORENCE BRADSHAW.

(To be continued.)

A TREMENDOUS REVOLUTION.

WE have received many more letters discussing and defending the attitude of Dr. Lyman Abbott towards supernatural religion, but it is not necessary that we should publish them, since they merely repeat arguments to which we have already given a place in the *Sun*.

They all miss the point, which is that, if there is not supernatural authority for Christianity, it becomes simply a system of moral philosophy, regarding whose soundness disagreement is justifiable and inevitable. If it is not believed in as coming from God by supernatural revelation, but is treated as simply human in its origin, it will be criticised on its merits alone, as the Jews, for instance, criticised it, and as it was criticised by the Romans. The Romans opposed the Christian system, and tried to destroy it as essentially inimical to the State and the established social order. They viewed the Christians, and dealt with them, as we now regard and treat Anarchists. If, then, the supernatural origin and character of Jesus are denied, his teachings will be examined in a light radically different from that in which their discussion has proceeded hitherto. They will cease to be the foundation of a religion imposing an obligation of belief as essential to obedience to God, and become debatable propositions made by a human teacher of philosophy, and, therefore, properly and necessarily examinable to determine their intrinsic value.

This would make a complete revolution in the spirit of Christendom. Christianity as a religious system would be wholly subverted. Instead of a religion deriving its authority from a supernatural source, we should have only a religious philosophy limited by the inability of the human intellect to go beyond this world of sense and fact. Jesus would be relegated to the plane of Buddha and Mohammed, and the Biblical stories of supernatural occurrences would take their place along with the tales of Greek and Roman, Assyrian and Egyptian, mythology. Nothing would be left for man except the guidance of human reason alone. The foundation upon which the Church and Christian theology are built would be swept away absolutely.

It is this destruction in which Dr. Abbott and his defenders are now engaged. If the Biblical story of Jonah and the whale is to be regarded as purely a parable, an allegory, whose actual occurrence was impossible, and, therefore, unbelievable, Christianity must descend from its exaltation as a religion of divine authority, and drop to the level of a system of religious philosophy or speculation, of human authorship. If the story of Jonah is merely allegorical, a fable, every other Biblical tale, from the creation of Adam and Eve up to the supernatural birth and resurrection of Jesus, is likewise allegorical, for they conflict equally with the possibilities under merely natural law. In other words, the arguments of Dr. Abbott and his defenders shatter the whole fabric of religion built by faith, and put the scriptural reports of supernatural occurrences in the same category with the tales of mythology.

This is a conclusion which the theologians of the school of Dr. Abbott try to avoid with a timidity which may be natural in view of their ecclesiastical relations, for it takes away the reason for their existence; but they cannot escape from it without intellectual stultification. They know that they have given up the whole authority of their theological system by making it a fabric of human speculation purely; but they dare not take the laity into their full confidence. Infidels though they be themselves, they tremble, and not unreasonably, at the consequences which would be involved in the destruction of the popular belief in the supernaturalism of the Bible.

Meantime archæology is joining with philosophy in

subjecting the scriptures to scientific criticism, and the results of the investigations and examinations are accepted as indisputable even in theological seminaries of orthodoxy, not merely by such men as Dr. Briggs, but also by professors whose heresy has not been brought under ecclesiastical condemnation.

Our correspondents who discuss the case of Dr. Abbott have no conception of the tremendous revolution in sentiment of which it is a symptom. All the Infidelity of past periods has been of no consequence as compared with the present Infidelity, of which, for the moment, he has made himself an example. It is an Infidelity which strikes at the supernatural basis upon which Christianity rests, and therefore relegates the religion of Christendom to the position of mere mythology and fallible human philosophy.

—*New York Sun*.

THE CHURCH AND FREEMASONRY.

THE Very Rev. Francis M. Wyndham, of St. Mary of the Angels, Bayswater, has just published *An Anti-Masonic Catechism of Freemasonry*, with a view of showing that it is an un-Christian institution, if not, as Leo Taxil, who was expelled from the craft, asserted, engaged in the worship of the Devil. The leading questions which the very reverend gentleman asks and replies to in the words of English and English-speaking Masonic writers all lead up to this, though the gentleman abstains from saying as much outright. He asks first, "What is Freemasonry?" and answers, "A peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols" (*Perfect Ceremonies of Craft Masonry*, p. 33; Woodford, *Defence of Freemasonry*, p. 20). Then he asks, "Has Masonry a religious character?" and replies: "Yes. It has always been understood to have a distinct reference to the worship of God and the moral culture of man" (Oliver, *Signs and Symbols*, p. xii.). He goes on to show that "its religion is the universal religion, or the religion of nature" (Preston, *Illustrations of Masonry*, pp. 125-6).

Further, it admits persons of all religions, including Jews and Moslems. Then the Very Rev. F. M. Wyndham asks: "May a Luciferian or a Satanist be admitted?" He answers: "It follows from the foregoing that he may, if he holds that Lucifer or Satan is the Great Architect of the Universe. Brother Whymper says: 'In Armenia there is a religious sect called "Yezeridis," who worship the Devil, and yet so comply with all Masonic conditions that a Universalist Freemason would have to admit them to initiation. They believe their Devil-god to be a true and living god; they supplicate and put their trust in him; they possess a volume of the sacred law; they even possess an ineffable name. All this is much more than the Universalist requires; the first qualification is ALL he demands'" (*Religion of Freemasonry*, p. 198). He then shows that Masonry is a secret system, having many characteristics in common with the ancient idolatrous mysteries, which all the Christian Fathers ascribed to the Devil. Incidentally, this modern Christian Father scores perhaps the strongest point against Freemasonry in showing the savage character of its oath under the penalty of "having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the root, and my body buried in the sand of the sea at low-water mark, or a cable's length from the shore, where the tide regularly ebbs and flows twice in the twenty-four hours."

Father Wyndham's modest conclusion is: "If Masonry be the perfection of religion, let all Englishmen become Masons. But if Christianity is of divine origin, while Masonry is not; if Christianity has been divinely founded, not for the exclusive benefit of a few 'initiated,' but for the salvation of the whole of mankind, it is our duty to shun and avoid this Secret and Mysterious Society, which tends to put itself in the place of the true religion. Masonry, in fine, substitutes the 'religion of nature' for Christianity, and favors a return to Paganism with all its attendant social and moral evils." What will the Prince of Wales, the Head of Freemasonry in England and the prospective Head of the Church, say?

DI VAUGHAN.

Poets, you say, are irreligious. No!
Their creed is love. Can you a better show?—B. D.

MOSES A PLAGIARIST.

THE Hebrew legislator was a clever juggler, who (*dit-on*) gave the Jews a god—Iao—(Jehovah), a name derived from the Egyptian, and a religion the *rechauffé* of the mysteries of Mitzrite priests (a tainted source), from whom he is said to have learnt wisdom—*i.e.*, charlatanism and roguery. There is nothing original in his code. The Decalogue—so-called—did not come from the top of Mount Sinai, but is copied from the precepts of Ptah-Hotep, a monarch who lived centuries before Moses and Aaron. "In concocting this religious code," says Shiller, "the Egyptian priests, and men versed in statecraft, came to his aid." From the mysteries taught in the theological school of Heliopolis he learnt how a handful of designing men could lead millions of benighted fellow-creatures by the nose, who never questioned their authority, and cheerfully found money to keep the jugglers going *ad infinitum*. If he could only equal them in audacity and craftiness, his success would be assured, and the Hebrew mind doomed to a slavery as degrading as that of the negroes who were kept in bondage, and reared as good Christians by the rascally planters of South America. Moses could discover nothing in the physical world to help him in devising his questionable scheme; he therefore looked into the clouds to the supernatural, the incomprehensible (!), for materials and miracles, and succeeded. We see in our enlightened days how easy it is for religious mountebanks to devise schemes to deceive the people and prey upon them. Take the lowest and most degrading kind of superstition, Boothism. The originator of the movement, a man of cunning, not learning, collected enormous sums of money where a Thales, Solon, or Socrates would but have raised coppers. But the man knows his countrymen, so many millions, mostly fools; hence his success. Then we come to the delusions of Swedenborg, the ravings of John Knox, the degrading mummery of Roman Catholics, the slobbering gush of Methodists, the not less wretched humbug of Unitarians, the moral decrepitude of Mormons, the brain-softening twaddle of Baptists and Boothites, the sickening antics of Shakers, not to forget the vagaries and delusions of Spiritualists and Theosophists. There remain still a smaller fry, or vermin, whose names you would forget if you knew them. Thus we get an idea of the follies and frauds inflicted upon the human race. Human beings have been fooled *ab initio* to the top of their bent. No wonder lunatic asylums are full to overflowing. The game of clerical impostors can only be stopped by enlightening the masses—asses, who, alas! seem to care little for enlightenment, by disestablishing State Churches, and by making the propagation of the lie about a man-begotten god a criminal offence. The Romans had an excellent law *—*actio stellionatus*—propagating false intelligence, cozenage, and trickery, which, if passed in our day, would consign preachers of religion to prisons or lunatic asylums. These blackbirds sing with the gnomes:—

The dazzling daylight oppresses,
Only darkness gives happiness.
We love to dwell deep down the earth-ball's kernel;
Above, where ether flames, all that sprung from Adam into Life
and Light,
We rightly condemn!

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

ACID DROPS.

IN all probability a frightful massacre was prevented by Sir Alfred Biliotti's rescue of the Moslems at Selino. More than three thousand men, women, and children were thus saved from cruel destruction. Yet there are Christians in England, and even in the House of Commons, who profess "no admiration" for this rescue, simply because the people of Selino do not belong to the Christian faith.

"There are now no Moslems left in the whole district of Selino," says the *Daily News* special commissioner at Canea. "The refugees," he adds, "are all so destitute, and so convinced of the impossibility of living beside the Christians in future, that they beg permission to emigrate to Smyrna." What a testimony to the beautiful influence of religion on human character!

The new Bishop of London has taken to wearing a white cope and mitre—the first Bishop of London who has done so for four hundred years. Evidently the High Churchmen are getting tired of the "principles of the glorious Reformation," and think there is no solid reason why the Church of England should not rival the Church of Rome in ecclesiastical tomfoolery.

* Against impostors.

The man-millinery and sacerdotal idolatry exhibited by the Bishop of London at the Church of St. Augustine, Kensington, has sent the evangelical old ladies of the *English Churchman* into hysterics. They see in it the fulfilment of prophecy—the man of sin adorning the scarlet woman of Babylon; and the episcopal mitre appears unto them like unto the crown of the heads of the seven-headed dragon of the Apocalypse.

Priestly petticoats appear to be an inheritance from savagery. St. John tells us that among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo the priests dress as women, and like to be treated as females. Bastian says that Patagonian sorcerers, who are chosen from children who have St. Vitus's Dance, go in women's clothes. This means they are not to be drafted for war. Among the Kodyaks there are men dressed up as women who are regarded as sorcerers. To don the feminine garb, to the savage mind, means adopting the feminine characteristics. There is also the desire to command attention by eccentricity and mystery.

Beyond this is the fact that the priests of many faiths have been eunuchs, a desirable precaution where there were vestal virgins. The priests of Cybele were eunuchs. In ancient times doubtless human sacrifices were offered to the earth goddess, but a substitution was accepted. So eunuchs formed a chief part in the worship of Hekate. To this day they make eunuchs for the sake of supplying the choirs of Christian churches on the continent.

The reason the clergy invariably wear black, says the *Sydney Bulletin*, is to remind them that they must keep things dark.

A magistrate held that a Jew named Goldstein, a button-hole machinist, who closed on Saturday and kept his workshop open on Sunday, had it open for "traffic" on that day, and convicted him. Goldstein appealed, and Justices Cave and Grantham quashed the conviction with costs.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have addressed a letter to the Pope vindicating their own titles against his pronouncement against Anglican orders. They say they approached their task in a spirit of meekness, but nevertheless it is necessary that the answer be cast in a controversial form. They want Christian peace, amity, and even reunion; but it will never do to impugn their title to be genuine priests.

Archbishop Langevin has threatened that all Roman Catholics who vote against the wishes of the Church in the Canadian elections shall be refused burial in consecrated ground when they die. Last year many Catholics voted against the wishes of the Church, or Mr. Laurier would never have come in; and now the Church is attempting to put on the screw a little tighter.

Archbishop Langevin does not say how he proposes to discover the way his flock vote. Does he mean to use the confessional for this purpose? If so, it is another proof that the Church never scruples to abuse its spiritual powers for earthly ends.

The *Two Worlds* for March 12 gives a portrait of Miss Florrie Cook, the medium who, over twenty years ago, bewitched Professor Crookes. She looks a smart woman, whose physical characteristics are the only notable ones apparent. The portrait helps to explain the Professor's enchantment.

The *New York Journal* is making quite a point of showing up the Bible, and continually points out old items of criticism as new and startling discoveries. In its issue for Feb. 28 it announces, in half-inch letters, "A New View of the Book of Isaiah," quoting the statement of Dr. Cheyne: "That portion of the Old Testament which is known as the book of Isaiah was, in fact, written by at least three writers—and possibly many more—who lived at different times and in different places. The passages in the accepted version which prophesy the coming of Jesus Christ have been misinterpreted. Their real meaning has hitherto not been understood."

This last statement, by the way, is entirely wrong. The interpretation of the alleged prophecy of Isaiah concerning Christ, "the Servant of the Lord," as referring to the collective people, has been adopted by rationalist Jews and sceptics for many centuries. It is found in the *Chissuk Emuna* of Rabbi Isaac, and Dr. Cheyne's suggestion that Jeremiah may be particularly referred to is as old. Dr. John Hall, the best paid, if not the most popular, preacher in New York, was asked his opinion of Dr. Cheyne's view. He remarked: "It is a poor policy to question the word of God."

Yankee newspaper enterprise sticks at nothing. One of

the leaders of the English Bar has been invited to contribute to the *New York Journal* "a short argument on the subject of 'Christ's Rising from the Dead,' stating whether in your opinion there is any evidence of this which would be acceptable in a court of law." Needless to say (the *Westminster Gazette* remarks), the busy and learned recipient of this extraordinary letter has replied that he has neither time nor disposition to write such an article. But why "needless"? Is it meant that the subject is too sacred for criticism, or that everybody knows there is no evidence for the Resurrection that would not be laughed at in a court of law? We really wish our contemporary would explain.

The Marquis of Bute is a good Catholic, but not a teetotal one, or he would never have ordered that the Cardiff couples who get married on his own wedding-day, April 16, and who will receive £25 for the same, are to have read to them the first eleven verses of the second chapter of the Gospel of St. John, descriptive of the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, where water was miraculously turned into wine.

How many people have thought what a mockery the marriage service is in England? "With this ring I thee wed" is a survival of an ancient Roman Pagan practice; "with my body I thee worship" is coarse idolatry; "and with all my worldly goods I thee endow" is a solemn and deliberate lie. The woman's vow to "obey" is a survival of the days when women were slaves, the mere ministers to men's carnal appetites. Yet thousands of seemingly intelligent men and women go through this absurd farce every year. By getting married in the registry office, people are not obliged to lie and to make fools of themselves.—*Dodo, in "Reynolds's Newspaper."*

Mary Hennessey was charged with carrying on a brothel at 16 Buzzard-street, Cardiff, and was fined £10 and costs as alternative to a month's imprisonment. It transpired that the Rev. Alfred Tilly, of the Parade, was the landlord of the house.

The United Free Methodist Church at Freiston, near Boston, Lincolnshire, has been the scene of a pugilistic encounter in the pulpit. Two rival preachers, the Rev. J. Langford and Mr. Everitt, had been invited by rival parties to preach. The latter, a local preacher, got there first. Mr. Langford called on Mr. Everitt to leave the pulpit, but he refused. Thereupon Mr. Langford's friends tried to forcibly evict him, but after a struggle were repulsed. Mr. Everitt continued in possession, and commented vigorously on the scene that had taken place.

Damages, fixed by agreement at £175, were awarded in the London Sheriff's Court to Miss E. M. G. Lulham against the Rev. Bruce Cuming, clerk in holy orders and chaplain to the Farnham Union, for breach of promise of marriage.

At Southwark, John William Paddon, forty-four, oil and colorman, was examined and remanded on a charge of stealing money from the collections of St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Bermondsey, with which he had been entrusted as people's warden.

The Rev. A. C. Dixon, a Baptist Revivalist, of Brooklyn, refused to renew his lease of the Academy of Music because Colonel Ingersoll had been allowed to lecture there. On this the Colonel observed that Mr. Dixon's God ought to give him a world all to himself. He said to an interviewer: "I do not wonder that Mr. Dixon objects to speaking in a theatre in which I am to speak. He is probably afraid that good sense is catching. An idea might force its way into his brain, and then he might stop preaching, and go to thinking. His refusal to make his customary noise in the Academy because I am to speak there is laughable. The poor man has to live in the same city that I do, in the same world, breathe the same air, feel the same cold, and see the same snow. How he must suffer!"

At a debate on Local Option at the Conservative Club, Watford, Mr. Biddlecombe said that he had an essay written by Dr. Lees, in which it was said that publicans ought not to be allowed to vote in municipal and parliamentary elections. Dr. Lees characterized this assertion as "a lie," and said of Mr. Biddlecombe, "That man is a liar." That man, however, sent to the papers the following extract from the United Kingdom Alliance Prize Essay, by Dr. F. R. Lees, (page 301):—"Do we, then, object to publicans having votes for the election of Members of Parliament, Poor Law Guardians, and Municipal Councillors?—*Unquestionably.*"

Dr. F. R. Lees, the teetotal advocate on Christian grounds, states in the *Watford Observer* that Charles Bradlaugh refused to meet him at Northampton. He also asserts that Bailie Lewis drove Bradlaugh from the platform at Edinburgh. Dr. Lees has either an active imagination or an eccentric memory. He is also ill-mannered, for he

applies such epithets as "idiotic" and "asinine" to his opponent "Lucifer." Dr. Lees spells the latter epithet "assinine," so he evidently needs a dictionary as well as a proper translation of the Bible.

According to the *Sporting Times*, the Salvationists at Port Elizabeth (South Africa) put out the following advertisement:—"Christian friends, why buy mutton at ninepence a pound, when you can get the Lamb of God for nothing?" This is called "Salvation Blasphemy"—as if a Salvationist could blaspheme!

A "Churchman" sends to the *Reading Observer* a list of questions handed to his young daughter, who was required at one of the churches in St. Mary's parish to confess her sins before confirmation. The questions were on the Commandments, and included the following: "II. Have I been in the habit of leaving unsaid my morning or evening prayers—or said them carelessly? Have I gone to church to see or meet people, or ever behaved irreverently there? Do I always thank God before and after meals?.....VII. Have I given way to impure thoughts, or done things to bring them; kept a guard over my eyes; joined in or listened to immodest talk; read the Bible with impure motives; been too familiar with others; eaten or drunk more than was good for me; neglected self-denial?"

The *Catholic News* (New York) writes in a rage on "The Blight of Infidelity." This journal supposes that morality will disappear from the world when people doubt that God could make a fish big enough to swallow a man. It also says that French sceptics like Voltaire secretly believed Christianity, while writing against it. Thus far the *Catholic News* is simply ridiculous. We hope it is seriously right, however, in saying that "the Infidels are getting their work done in the schools" in America.

By the way, the *Catholic News* has an article headed: "Our Lord's Divinity: Proof of it Furnished by New Testament Writers." What a delicious argument in a circle! It is worthy of the paper, and, no doubt, of its readers.

Professor Henry Drummond is said by his friends to have been a lovable man of noble character. Well, we are ready to believe it; but we have read his books, and we cannot form a high opinion of his intellect. In the *Ascent of Man* he paraded as his own several arguments that had been stated by Darwin, and stated more scientifically. Professor Drummond had an easy style (some called it cheap and easy), and that seems to have been the chief secret of his success. It is absurd to call him a thinker.

It is said that 22,000 copies were sold of Drummond's *Ascent of Man*, and 119,000 copies of his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. How much fewer copies have been sold of Herbert Spencer's works! Yet what a difference in their contents, and in their influence on the mind of the world.

"If there was no god who first created man or beast, who first created a beast like you?" This pious and elegant query was scratched into the solid oak panel of the door of Colonel Ingersoll's residence in New York, on Saturday afternoon, February 13. This question went deeper than any other that has ever been put to the Colonel; in fact, the Colonel couldn't dispose of it himself, and had to call in the aid of a carpenter. It is to be hoped, however, that this Christian quorist's example will not be followed extensively, or the Colonel will have to fix up a steel door.

Two hundred years ago the Christians would have burnt or tortured Ingersoll's body. Now they can only scratch his front door. The change is not all that could be desired; still, it is something, and the rest will come in time. Some American Salvationists have been burning Ingersoll in effigy, but that didn't hurt him much. The Colonel wasn't even aware that the performance was going on.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," etc. Cleretta Nora Avery, who is called the "piccanniny preacher," has been holding services in Philadelphia. She is only eleven, and it is four years since she received a divine call to preach the Gospel. This beats Jesus Christ hollow. He was twelve when he had that little dispute with the doctors but he waited till he was thirty before he began preaching. Other times, other manners.

The Duchess of Teck opens a bazaar at Kensington Town Hall, in support of the Mission to the French in London, who are said to be some of the most ungodly of the inhabitants of the great metropolis.

Mr. Howard Evans, of the Liberation Society, claims that Nonconformists are in a majority in England and Wales, irrespective of Scotland. He gives the following figures as

to the respective sittings in church and chapel :—Established Church, 6,778,288; ten Protestant denominations, 7,600,003. It is needless to say that the number of sittings does not insure the number of sitters.

Governor Waite, of Colorado, has written a letter to the *New York World*, setting forth the evils of woman suffrage in his State. After saying that, theoretically, women may have a right to vote, he refers to the dangers of unrestricted manhood suffrage, and proceeds: "It is well known that the bulk of church membership is composed of women, and that women are susceptible to ecclesiastical influence in far greater degree than men." The governor details instances in which the woman vote has been controlled by the Church. As Robert Lowe said when the Franchise Bill was passed: "We must educate our masters."

Mr. G. Fuller, at a meeting of the Deritend Ward, Birmingham, made some sensation by quoting passages from a recent sermon of a Birmingham clergyman. This gentleman said, referring to the Board schools: "Shame on you mothers who let your children go to such schools. They had better stop at home and rot of the foulest disease than go to these places. The religion taught is a shilly-shallying religion, and no religion at all. Nonconformist churches were like a road with twelve finger-posts, none of which led to Heaven." The quotation, which so admirably reflects the clerical view, was received with energetic cries of "Shame!"

The *Figaro*, under the conduct of Herbert Vivian, is ultra-sensational, and is trying to startle the world with an account of Satan-worship at Brighton. It is difficult to believe that anything like what it describes goes on without the cognizance of the police. The same number of the *Figaro* has the story of "A Plot to Kill the Queen."

Apropos of Lent, it is recalled that Sir Richard F. Burton once performed the duties of the "blessed month" of the Moslems, the Ramazan, and for the space of sixteen consecutive hours and a quarter he neither ate, drank, smoked, snuffed, nor even swallowed his saliva designedly. He said: "The middle and lower ranks observe the duties of the season with exceeding zeal; of all who suffered severely from such total abstinence I found but one patient who would eat even to save his life." And what does Richard Burton say of the effect of this self-denial? It makes the Moslem "unhealthy and unamiable." "Like the Italian, the Anglo-Catholic, and the Greek fasts, the chief effect of the 'blessed month' upon true believers is to darken their tempers into positive gloom."

"Dagonet," in the *Referee*, has a word or two to say in favor of embalming: "The anti-cremationists cling to their skeletons, and nothing will induce them to part with their bones. This is where embalming has such a heavy pull over cremation. Properly embalmed, one retains even one's complexion, and half the difficulties of the Great Resurrection are solved for the simple-minded. The body will be there complete, and ready to wake from the last sleep. It will be like the winding-up of the long-stopped watch, for not only will the case be there, but the works also. If some such idea as this were not ever present to the mind, the idea of embalming would never have held its ground for so many thousands of years as it has."

The *Home Companion* says: "A beautiful little story is told of a chapel built by an infidel which should encourage all of us to be steadfast in prayer, and to wait patiently for the result. The man would not allow religion to be spoken of, but his good wife made it a rule to pray for her husband at twelve o'clock every day. At the end of twelve months there was no change in her husband. Six months more went past, and her faith wavered; but she thought, "Perhaps God will answer my prayer when I'm dead." The very same day he did not come down to dinner, and when she went to look for him she found him praying for the forgiveness of his sins in the same little room in which she had prayed for him so often." We should like to know who this infidel was, and where the chapel which he erected is situated. Will Mr. Hartley Aspden, the editor, oblige?

At Christchurch, Sandown, Isle of Wight, a cat made her appearance in church. Poor puss was caught and driven into a cupboard in the vestry, where she was invited to partake of a piece of poisoned meat. This pussy did, and so ended her church experiences. In her next incarnation she should be as difficult to entice into church as the average working man.

Sidney G. Trist sends a letter on some experiments on dogs carried out in the laboratory of University College Hospital. He states that there were a series of terrible experiments on dogs, whose throats were cut, whose blood vessels and hearts were penetrated by metallic tubes, whose skulls were bored through, whose chests were torn open, whose hearts were wrapped in wadding, and whose nerves were cut and stimulated by electricity. Into a hole

made in the dogs' heads a brass tube was screwed. These experiments, says Mr. Trist, were performed under curare, a drug which restrains to the extent of paralyzing the animal, thereby preventing the slightest movement, while the poor creature is sensitive to pain, and conscious of what is being done; and he commends the report in the *Journal of Physiology* to the conscience of Christian England.

The old Pope is as wily as they make them. In an allocution addressed to the Italian aristocracy, he tells them that their rank, which "may seem at first sight the result of mere chance, in reality is due to the benign providence of heaven. Why should we deny a particular consideration to pre-eminence of birth when Our Savior Himself took it into account? He chose poverty as His lot, and never sought to be associated with wealth; but He, nevertheless, elected that His birth should be from a noble lineage."

The Pope may think Jacob, Thamar, David, Bathsheba, etc., very noble lineage, but they would scarcely be considered respectable members of society at the present day.

Dr. Lyman Abbott has been lecturing on the book of Ecclesiastes, and is reported as saying: "In this book a poet of a much later age has taken up Solomon as a portrait of life. From the ideal character the poet draws his sentiments. He imagines Solomon musing over the problem of life. I do not know what any man can make out of this book who believes in verbal or even plenary inspiration."

Another instance of the alteration of tone by the men of God towards their fetish book occurs in the discourse to men at Cambridge by the Rev. Dr. Ryle, President of Queen's College. He said: "In the Bible there was progress; the Trinity was not mentioned in the Old Testament, but continually in the New [though we do not recollect coming across the word]. The change in the laws relating to manslaughter was another instance of this; the Old Testament taught man to take eye for eye, but Christ said He taught something better." The Old Testament was imperfect, the New Testament perfect. Some day it will be discovered that the New Testament is imperfect too. Meanwhile the great thing is to recognize that the Bible is there to save our souls through the medium of the parsons.

"Evangelist Moody," observes the *Detroit News*, "says he could get out a Monday morning paper without doing any Sunday work; and, in view of his accustomed method of securing facts, we are inclined to believe him."

Two hundred persons replied in a few hours to an advertisement in a London daily for a hangman to a British colony, with a salary of £250 per annum and expenses. Some men would hang the whole human race in daily instalments for such an income. Even if the Devil were to die, or retire from business, a good many persons, chiefly clergymen, would apply to fill the vacancy.

The *Bible Advocate* says: "There are four grand arguments for the truth of the Bible. The first, the miracles on record; the second, the prophecies; the third, the character of the doctrine; and the moral character of the penmen." These four arguments tell, also, for its untruth.

The *Aberdeen Evening Gazette* says: "It was only the other day that a Glasgow evangelist was sent to prison for beating his wife—after meeting-time. He preached 'grace, mercy, and peace' abroad, but at home he beguiled the time with pagan 'ructions,' subjecting his wife to treatment of which even the rudest barbarian might have been ashamed. Another 'saint' of this type was dealt with in Glasgow yesterday. The mere sight of him seems to have set the ballie on fire, but the sentence was out of all proportion to the magisterial indignation. It was disgracefully lenient. 30s. or 21 days is an outrageously mild censure upon a low scamp who preaches salvation at mission meetings, while at home he practises gross heathenism by assaulting and threatening to choke his wife, and by leaving the woman and her child one half slice of bread as a day's rations."

The Rev. R. C. Fillingham, of Amptill, is a very good Radical, but rather a curious kind of Christian. He writes in the *Echo*: "I do not think that Christianity rests upon the truth of the story of the Resurrection as generally understood. I think it is quite possible to be a good Christian, and yet doubt the material Resurrection." Mr. Fillingham seems inclined to quibble about the word "material," for he asks the old conundrum, "What is matter?" We would only remind him that Jesus is reported as saying after his Resurrection, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have" (Luke xxiv. 39).

The Rev. A. Wight, of Wroxall, Isle of Wight, entertained his parishioners with "a little pantomime," in which he satirized some of his fellow-townsmen. In return, his parishioners got up a pantomime of their own, burning the man of God in effigy.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 21, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30; subject, "The Koran and the Bible; with Special Reference to the Eastern Question and the Future of Turkey."
 March 28, Huddersfield.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 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 Efra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

P. DOBSON.—Thanks. The address is added as you suggest.
 G. PROCTOR.—The matter shall have attention, and if possible a lecture shall be arranged at Gainsboro'.

HEXHAM.—Sorry we cannot go so far back. It seems to us an unlikely passage to have appeared in the *Christian World*. The book you mention is hardly worth your buying. Thanks for cuttings.

W. H. SPIVEY.—Subjects were forwarded in your own envelope. We hope they reached you.

H. B. DODDS sends a subscription, and "hopes Mr. Foote will be able to keep his Lecture Scheme going."

G. ROBERTS (Pl) mouth.—Mr. Foote will offer your Branch a date shortly.

H. GOOD.—Thanks for your cordial letter. Of course we shall "keep pegging away," but the Lecture Scheme cannot be carried on without financial support. The matter rests with the party.

THEIST.—Your verses are good, but they would be more suitable to a Unitarian paper. We hope you will yet take Humanity as a substitute for God.

THOMAS MARTIN.—Glad to hear a Branch is being started at Pontypridd. See paragraph. Mr. Foote hopes to visit your district before long.

J. DAVIES, subscribing to the Lecture Scheme, trusts that "the Fund will be augmented by the more wealthy members of the party."

T. MATHER.—You misquote the passage from Tyndall. He never said anything about marrying an Atheist, but that if he wanted a good father, a good husband, or a good citizen, he would look among the Atheists for him.—Your order handed to Mr. Forder, to whom please send direct in future.

E. H. T.—It is impossible to deal with such questions in this column.

E. D. H. DALY, subscribing to Shilling Month, says it is a pity that Freethought propaganda cannot get to the Isle of Wight. There used to be a pretty active propaganda at Portsmouth, but a few "constructive" Secularists killed the movement there. We hope to see it revived.

J. STANWAY hopes there will be a good response to our appeal before the end of March, and thinks it is the duty of every Freethinker to contribute.

T. ROBERTSON (Glasgow).—Glad to hear you have got the N.S.S. manifesto against the Voluntary Schools Bill inserted in part in some Glasgow papers, and in full in the *Herald*, which has the widest circulation.

LECTURE SCHEME.—T. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; H. W. Parsons, £3; Four Gainsboro' Friends, 5s.; H. B. Dodds, 2s. 6d.; H. Good, 2s. 6d.; J. Davies, 2s.; Three Friends, 4s. 6d.; A. S. Webb, 1s.; E. D. H. Daly, 5s.; James Stanway, 2s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*: C. Wilson, 10s.; Florrie Embleton, 3s.; J. Leipper, 5s.; E. Self, 2s. 6d.; from Glasgow, 2s. 6d.; D. Hughes, 3s. 6d.

H. W. PARSONS.—Proverbs xxxiii. 6. says: "Eat not the bread of him that hath an evil eye." Such expressions as "If thine eye be evil" (Deut. xv. 9), "His eye shall be evil" (Deut. xxviii. 54), "If thine eye be evil the whole body shall be full of darkness" (Matt. vi. 23 and Luke xi. 24), and "If thine eye be evil" (Matt. xx. 15), were taken as countenancing the superstition when the *jettura* was believed in.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—*Der Arme Teufel—To-Day—New York Public Opinion—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—New York Sun—New York Herald—New York Journal—Birmingham Argus—North British Daily Mail—Homeopathic World—Watford Observer—Figaro—Reforce—Newcastle Daily Leader—Glasgow Herald—West Herts Post—The Home Companion—Reading Observer.*

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.

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.

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

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

SPECIAL.

MARCH is another "Shilling Month." I am appealing to the readers of the *Freethinker* on behalf of my Lecture Scheme, under which Freethought lectures have been, and are being, delivered in all parts of the country. I invite the readers to send me, during this month, any donations they can afford, from a shilling upwards. All I receive will be duly acknowledged week by week in these columns. Remittances, by cheque or postal order, should be addressed to me at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OWING to the strength of bigotry in Derby, which is often said to be fifty years behind the times, the local N. S. S. Branch is as yet unable to get a suitable hall for Sunday lectures. Mr. Foote's lectures last Sunday had to be given in the upper Athenæum, adjoining the Royal Hotel. The room is neither handsome nor commodious, and is unlikely to attract the general public. Unfortunately, too, the weather was very unpropitious. The morning and afternoon meetings were but moderate, but there was a much improved attendance in the evening, including a good sprinkling of ladies. The discussion was of the poorest description, but the lectures were most heartily applauded.

Happily the Derby Branch, in spite of all obstacles, is making gratifying progress. Its membership has doubled since Mr. Foote's debate with Mr. Lee. Mr. Cohen's lectures—many of them under the Lecture Scheme—were also of great assistance. The Branch hopes to entertain the Conference, and is making desperate efforts to obtain a large hall for the evening public meeting.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (March 21) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., taking for his subject, "The Koran and the Bible; with Special Reference to the Eastern Question and the Future of Turkey." Freethinkers should try to bring their Christian friends to hear this lecture.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, to a most enthusiastic audience. Mr. Watts was in his best form. Mr. Heaford occupied the chair. In response to appeals from the chairman and the lecturer, over £1 2s. was subscribed towards defraying the expenses of the Children's Party, which will be held on March 31.

This evening, Sunday, March 21, Mr. Watts lectures in the Secular Hall, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell, at 7.30, upon "Sin and Secular Salvation."

Mr. George Anderson has placed in Mr. Forder's hands forty-eight thousand leaflets for gratuitous distribution. Branches desirous of having a parcel can be supplied, carriage paid, on sending one shilling for five hundred, or one-and-six for a thousand.

The Annual Children's Party takes place, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, on Wednesday evening, March 31, in the large hall of the Club Union, next door to the Holborn Town Hall, in Clerkenwell-road. Application for children's tickets (free) or for adults tickets (threepence) should be made to Miss Vance, at the N. S. S. office, 377, Strand, W.C. Presents of toys, apples, oranges, or other eatables, should be sent to the same address. Subscriptions should be sent to the honorary treasurer, Mr. R. Forder, 28, Stonecutter-street, E.C.

A Branch of the National Secular Society is being formed at Pontypridd. Friends meet at 28 Middle Street, Trallwn, every Sunday evening at 6.30. It is intended to have lectures in the locality as soon as possible. We hope the new branch will be supported by all our readers in the district.

The *Glasgow Herald*, one of the most important papers north of the Tweed, gave, in its issue for March 9, the full text of the Manifesto on the Education Bill issued by the National Secular Society.

The Education Department, in answer to the Torquay Nonconformist Council, has laid it down that if there is a separate class-room children withdrawn from religious instruction must there receive secular instruction while religious instruction is being given. But if there is no class-room in which such children can be separately taught during the time set apart for religious instruction, they need not attend the school until the time at

which the secular instruction begins. A knowledge of this rule should lead to increased withdrawals from religious teaching.

We regret to see, from the *Liberator* (February 6), that Mr. Joseph Symes passed his fifty-sixth birthday (Jan. 29) in bed, prostrated by the effects of influenza. February 10 was the anniversary of his arrival in Melbourne, and he appears to have had a hard fight ever since. He says: "Nothing has altered my principles; I have not changed, not departed a hair's breadth from the position I took up twenty years ago in England, thirteen years ago here." We hope soon to hear that Mr. Symes has recovered.

We see that George Macdonald, of the New York *Truth-seeker*, has called his "new boy," born on February 17, Putnam Foote Macdonald. "The second name," says the humorous father, "with due appreciation and respect, might be attributed to prenatal influence from abroad; but—Dr. E. B. Foote, senior, consenting—the youngster will owe that to the admiration, not to call it veneration, in which the doctor is held by the erring parents."

Dr. E. B. Foote, junior, contributes a letter to the *Free-thought Magazine* on the subject of Mr. Putnam's death, from which we gather that it has been said that Messrs. Foote and Watts "refused to attend the funeral in Boston mainly on the ground that it would compromise them." "I was in a position," says Dr. Foote, "to hear if they said any such thing. The fact is, they could not have attended the funeral and kept the engagements and taken the steamer at the time appointed." This is perfectly true. The funeral was on Tuesday afternoon at Boston, and the boat left New York early on Wednesday morning, and Messrs. Foote and Watts had paid for their passage. Mr. Eugene Macdonald, who did attend the funeral, failed to reach New York in time to see the *St. Louis* sail.

The use of the word "refused" in this connection is really absurd. Messrs. Foote and Watts were not even asked to attend the funeral, probably because it was well known that they could not possibly do so, having an engagement in New York on the Tuesday evening, which could not have been cancelled without much expense, and having also to sail for England the very next morning.

"Much has been written about this," said George Long, the historian, in regard to the legend of the "Thundering Legion," "and more than is worth reading." We may say the same with regard to Mr. Putnam's death. Our American friends will pardon us, we hope, for remarking that continence in speech is often as dignified and wholesome as continence in other matters.

Longton has decided to have Sunday concerts in the park. The plea that such concerts would empty the churches and chapels was disregarded. One councillor said that the ministers must wake up and make their services attractive.

MAYBE.

I LOOKED into a sweating-den last night,
Where men and women slaved and suffered bravely.
"Is this the way," I asked a storeman gravely,
"My frank friend, Jones, became a man of might?"
"What! Jones! the boss! Oh, no, he's reckoned white."
"He doesn't know! This branch is run by Wright."
"Oh, no!" (and slightly blazed that solid storeman)
"The boss is white!—but we've a damn bad foreman!"

And as I left, the earth-den rose in sight,
Its hosts of men and women slaving bravely,
And came the larger question still more gravely:
"Does God—the great God—know how hard they fight?
Or some cat-hearted deity—like Wright,
Unwatched—take from their sorrows wild delight?"
"That's so" (some voice came echoing the storeman),
"The boss is white—but they've a damn bad foreman!"

—*Sydney Bulletin*.

L. M. D.

Mr. Albert Spicer, M.P., has interrogated the Attorney-General in the House of Commons concerning the alleged diversions to Church of England purposes of a Non-conformist bequest of £52,600, which was left in the year 1690 by Lord Wharton, a prominent Nonconformist of his day. This is raking up old matters with a vengeance. If the Church had to hand back all it has taken from Catholics and Dissenters, it would be considerably reduced, if not ruined.

FACTS.

THERE is a certain funny story that cannot be told too often. "Oh," cried the visitor to a jail, when his friend behind the bars told him what he was imprisoned for; "oh, they can't put you in jail for that!" "The devil they can't," exclaimed the man; "I'm here!" To turn like this man from theories as to whether a thing can be or is probable to be so, to the actual hard fact whether it is so—this is a method of thinking that all should endeavor to adopt as habitual. In every case where the practical facts can be obtained—and there are few where they cannot—the application of this way of getting at the truth should be the very first thing done.

Says one: "Freethought must produce immorality, Freethinkers having no foundation, no ultimate sanction, for the moral command; while Christians have a foundation for it, and they are, moreover, incited to virtue by promise of heaven and deterred from sin by threat of a hell." This sounds very well. But how about the actual facts to be observed, which testify to the precise opposite? Which nations are the most criminal, those the most or those the least religious? Is it Germany and England that are notorious for gambling, brawling, assassination, and criminality generally, or is it Spain and Mexico? Are France and America bywords for tyranny and extortion, cruelty and injustice, while Russia and Ireland receive the praises of every tongue for equity and peace? Which of the nationalities among us are the immoral ones? Never mind theory; let us go out to the nearest public place and see whether the first couple we find drunk and quarrelling there belong to those nationalities which we know believe least in Christianity, or to those that believe in it most.

Freethinkers are unhappy. All Freethinkers that disbelieve in a future life have lost what constitutes the greatest happiness of mankind. Freethinkers, in spreading their doctrines, take from Christians the only thing that makes life worth living—the only thing that enables them to endure it and that supports them under its troubles. The foregoing is another of those propositions that look well. But by looking around one will see Freethinkers everywhere going about very jolly, quite absurdly oblivious of the duty they are under to invest themselves with the degree of dolefulness requisite to corroboration of their pious friends' theory. What Freethinker has felt a loss of happiness upon discarding the Christian belief? How many Freethinkers cannot testify to increased cheerfulness and appreciation of life?

Freethinkers are also expected to be unhappy from another cause. There is alleged to be in the world of science, into which we would usher mankind, a lack of human feeling. There is in it a lack of material for emotion. It contains nothing congeneric, congenial, to man. In its inconceivable spaces, inexorable laws, unassimilable minerals, is found nothing capable of raising or filling man's heart. The scientific beliefs are "unsatisfying," "innutritive." Sometimes they are "cold," "frigid." What needs to be said to all this? Simply what we said before. Look about and see. Look about and see whether scientists and Freethinkers are less happy, or more happy, than Christians. Nothing further in disproof is required.

Surely it is well sometimes in making statements to construct them so that they will have some connection, some faint relation, with facts. Artemus Ward said that a comic paper is the better for having a few jokes in it; perhaps theories about facts are the better for having some distant correspondence to the facts.

—*Truthseeker*.

In France we are already for the most part without religion; the man of the world believes no more than the scholar; he has his fund of ideas more or less simple or profound, on which he lives without feeling the want of addressing himself to the priest. In Germany the work of decomposition of dogmas is also very advanced. In England it only commences, but it goes fast. Christianity seems everywhere to be followed by Freethinking. With Buddhism and Hinduism it is the same. In India the majority of intelligent men are Freethinkers; in China there is no national religion. Yes, it will be a long time yet; but religion is passing away; and we can already imagine the time when Europe will be quite without it.—*Ernest Renan*.

A REAL AND IMAGINARY DEATH-BED SCENE.

Who is not familiar with the poems and hymns of that brilliant Christian scholar of the last century, William Cowper? His father a clergyman, and his associates through life highly exemplary, we find the poet a model of purity and devotion. Tender, affectionate, and timid to a fault, the reader is shocked to learn that he imagined himself doomed to endless woe. This so preyed on his mind, he shunned society, and was prompted on several occasions to attempt suicide. The unpardonable sin, of which he was taught there was no forgiveness in this life or in the coming one, seemed to fill him with despair. Says a recent writer: "No picture of a death-bed scene ever equalled in horror that of William Cowper, though a pious, sincere, and devoted Christian. All his life he was subject to insane ravings; but they assumed a more aggravated form as he neared the end; the yawning gulf of hell he fancied was waiting to receive his departing spirit. His lamentations and pathetic appeals to a frowning God almost crazed his attendants, and compelled some of them to leave the room."

Who has not read the death-bed scene of Altamont, as portrayed by Dr. Young? It was published as a reading-lesson in the school books of two generations ago, to illustrate the miserable death of an unbeliever. Though a work of fiction, it is cited as a fact, and many a sceptic has been pointed to this awful scene, described in Young's most vigorous style, as the fate which awaits the unregenerate soul about leaving this life. No doubt many a sinner has been frightened into the church after reading the ravings of poor Altamont. We quote briefly for the delectation of the Christian reader: "My soul as my body lies in ruins—in scattered fragments of broken thoughts. Remorse for the past throws my thoughts on the future. Worse dread of the future strikes it back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou would struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames! That is not an everlasting flame; that is not an unquenchable fire!.....My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy! my unkindness has murdered my wife! And is there another hell? Oh, thou blasphemed, yet indulgent Lord God! Hell itself is a refuge if it hide me from thy frown."

Young inquired on one occasion: "Who can write the absurd like me?" He knew his own worth in that direction, and it is well represented in his ridiculous death-bed scenes of an infidel. But the real death-bed scenes of Cowper, born, educated, and living a practical Christian life, in his wild, insane ravings about an angry God, and the fiery hell that awaited his miserable soul, eclipsed the imaginary scene, and shows what a frightful death a believer can die. The real infidel may well exclaim: "Oh, God, save me and mine from the wretched death of the believer Cowper."

—*Progressive Thinker.*

WHY THE TURK DISLIKES THE CHRISTIAN.

WHERE did the Turk first get his fierce and inextinguishable hatred of the "Christians"?

Was it not very largely the result of those first Crusades which, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, carried fire and sword into the midst of the Turkish domain, spreading death and ruin in their track, and wresting from the Turk, for a time, an important portion of his territory? Certainly the character and results of those undertakings were well calculated to kindle an undying hatred of their perpetrators in the Moslem breast. Consider the following pen-picture of the historian, relative to the Crusaders' storming of Jerusalem: "The Saracens gave way before them. They retreated through the streets, fighting at intervals, until they were driven into the precincts of the Mosque of Omar. Blood flowed in the gutters, and horrid heaps of the dead lay piled at every corner. None were spared by the frenzied Christians, who saw in the gore of the infidels the white way of redemption. Ten thousand dead, scattered through the city, gave token of the merciless spirit of the men of the West. Another ten thousand were heaped in the reeking courts of the great mosque on Mount Moriah. 'God wills it,' said the pilgrims. The indiscriminate butchery of the Saracens was carried out by the rank and file of the Crusading army. In this bloody work they needed no incentive—no commander. Each sword flamed with hatred until it was cooled in the dripping life of the enemies of Christ."

"The spirit of the massacres," the historian adds, "is well illustrated in the letter which the Christian princes sent to his Holiness the Pope. The devout writers say: 'If you wish to know what we did to the enemies we found in the city, learn that in the portico of Solomon, and in the temple, our horses walked up to their knees in the impure blood of the Saracens.'"

THEOSOPHY.

I HAVE just been struck by a thought wave. This is the exact truth, though those who traduce me may dispute it.

Impossible it may seem, but I have been biffed by one of the billows of Theosophic surf, and now look forward to the happy day when the Mahatma who has charge of this district shall see fit to reincarnate me, that I may lead a better and a higher life.

I long for the hour when I shall put on my astral overcoat, take my little astral lamp in my hand, and go forth among the stars, with nothing to hinder me from taking a bath in the Milky Way if I choose; nobody to order me off the astral grass; when I may drink from the great astral dipper, or climb up the southern cross, just as I darn please.

There is nothing like Theosophy to make a man feel good; the conviction that he is to come again to this teary vale, eat the same lobskouse and drink the same kind of beer once again, is a comforting thought. To rest assured that hell, after all, is not the man-trap we have been taught is solace unto itself. Who would not be an astralite if he could get the job? Who would not waltz with Blavatsky adown the Milky, or do up Judge in a game of astral golf; roll hoop with Saturn's rings, or use the moons of Jupiter for a go at ten-pins?

Theosophy, I have learned, is the science of believing all you are told, particularly if the information contains hard words you cannot pronounce. But I did not learn this all at once; when I was informed that my Ego was to be reincarnated, I casually inquired if prompt medical attention would not advert it; and, on being told that I should have to work out my own Karma, I promptly replied that I had the money, and would rather pay it if they would state the amount. I had an idea it was some kind of a road tax, and I am not good on shovel work. I have been getting thought-waves right along; more thoughts than I ever thunk afore, and not one I could copyright. When a true Theosophist gets in hot water he telegraphs a few thought-waves to his Elder Brothers, the Mahatmas, who by profession are snake-jugglers in India. No matter how cute a trick the Mahatma may be teaching his pet snake, he will always stop and send a few thought-waves to his democratic disciple in Boston. That settles the difficulty, even if the Mahatma loses a rupee's worth of custom.

It must not for a moment be supposed that the Mahatma does these things for money; he earns his bread by training the venomous asp and the deadly hoodoo snake to swap their physical bodies for the astral form of a winged octopus, and *vice versa*, at his command. The Mahatma is also called an Adept.

Theosophy has no hell in its catechism, and I like that. It also permits one to return to earth again some centuries hence, and see how the trolley death score stands in Brooklyn, view the new East River bridges, and brush up on local politics. Dead men may return and put knockout drops in the coffee of the physician who gave them the wrong prescription, and the man who "didn't know 'twas loaded" will have to dodge the man he shot.

My next lesson is on the Kama Loka, the Rupa Loka, the Devachani, with three pages of Esoteric-Esotericism. Before the discovery of the thought-ray this would have discouraged me, but I shall simply trust to a good-natured Mahatma to send along a few bubbles of think, and it will all be clear as a marriage morn.

P.S.—Am trying to get my wife interested, so I won't have to say my prayers any more. J. PERLEY ROBINSON.

—*Watson's Illuminator.*

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) Got your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

Children's Annual Party.

Collected at Athenæum Hall:—C. Escare, 1s.; E. Jones, 1s.; S. Hartmann, 1s.; H. F. S., 1s.; Hoskins, 1s.; C. Wilson, 5s.; G. Schiller, 2s. 6d.; Anonymous friends, 9s.—R. FORDER, Treasurer.

SABBATH DISTINCTIONS IN SCOTLAND.

THAT Scotland is *par excellence* the land of "Sabbath Observance" is one of those propositions which nobody will deny. But there are metaphysical distinctions as to what is allowable on the first day of the week, and what is not, that only a Scotchman can appreciate; while more puzzling still are the widely divergent and seemingly irreconcilable views that obtain even among strict Sabbatarians in different localities north of the Tweed. The sinfulness or otherwise of certain things is largely a matter of geography, for what is perfectly allowable, or, at all events, passes unquestioned in one part of the country, is loudly denounced as Sabbath desecration in another, and *vice versa*.

In Glasgow, for instance, there is a capital service of trams and omnibuses on Sunday, and the new subway does a large business; while in Edinburgh to so much as mention Sunday cars raises a Sabbatarian storm, and no one would dream of suggesting a service of trains on the suburban line on the first day of the week. On the other hand, you can have pleasure-sailing to any extent on the Forth on Sunday, while of the large fleet of steamers on the Clyde on week-days not one sails on the "Sawbath." It is very wonderful!

Just now public feeling in the West of Scotland is stirred to its depths by a proposal to run a steamer on the Clyde on Sundays, and efforts are being made to get the authorities at the different piers to close these against the persons who purpose desecrating the "Sawbath." The Dunoon Commissioners have intimated to the secretary of the Sunday Steamboat Association that they are not willing to open the pier there on Sunday, and at other places the same attitude is being adopted. But it seems that the lawyers question whether the piers can legally be closed against any steamer, even on Sunday, so that further developments are awaited.

—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

BOOK CHAT.

AN article on "The Sicilian Peasant," in *Macmillan's Magazine*, gives an interesting account of some Sicilian superstitions. The peasants believe that every object has an impalpable image or double, which can be detached and penetrate other bodies, and in this way explain the phenomena of dreams. Poor women pray to their dead relatives before going to bed. One woman refused to take flowers to the family tomb on All Souls' Day because none of her dead relations had ever revealed winning lottery numbers to her in a dream. "They forget me," she said, "so I will forget them." Charms are worn by witches who have undergone a novitiate, and amulets also are generally worn.

The love-charms of Sicily are numerous. A very popular one is to put into an egg-shell a few drops of the blood of the longing lover. The shell is exposed to the sun for three days, and to the moon and dew for three nights. It is then burnt to a powder, and administered secretly in wine or coffee to the object of affection.

Near Trapani is a church dedicated to St. Vito, to which repair those affected by nervous diseases. A girl was taken there by her parents. A young peasant forced open her mouth with an iron spoon. The peasant put his mouth close to hers, and called loudly to the demon to come out of her. But his own sweetheart dragged him away, fearing that the evil spirit, on leaving the girl, would take possession of her lover.

Professor Henry Drummond, who died last week at the age of forty-seven, was distinctly a liberalizing influence among the semi-fossilized Presbyterians with whom his lot was cast. His early work, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, was an attempt to inject the scientific doctrine of the survival of the fittest into the moribund corpse of Calvinism; while his latest, *The Ascent of Man*, was an attempt to vaccinate the healthy body of evolutionary science with the virus of old Theism.

J. E. Hodder Williams, the writer of some notes on "Continental Literature" in the March number of the *New Century Review*, says: "It is impossible to take any interest in contemporary German writings; a heavy dullness reigns supreme. A well-known German critic comes to the painful conclusion that 'the literature of United Germany is neither hot nor cold, but dreadfully commonplace and absolutely destitute of individuality.' The truth is that the German of to-day is no reader, and there is no demand for literature of a serious nature."

Dr. A. Donaldson Smith, in his work describing his travels *Through Unknown African Countries*, says that the

Abyssinians of the plains, although good Christians, are but little less savage in their eating habits than cannibals. He regards them as cruel barbarians bearing a Christian label. Further, he says: "There are moral considerations which should compel all the civilized people of the world to lend their support to the crushing out of the Abyssinian power, and to the substitution of a humane government in place of Menelek's brutal rule. Never have the evils of slavery shown themselves in a more terrible light than that in which they are now manifesting themselves in Abyssinia; nor could as cruel a government be found in the world as that which is in store for the tribes among whom I journeyed, if Menelek be not checked." Menelek, be it remembered, is a good Christian, and the Christian powers have agreed to crush out slavery, when practised by Moslems.

Dr. Edwin A. Abbott, formerly head-master of the City of London School, and author of *Philochristus*, *The Kernel and the Husk*, etc., has put out a new volume in favor of "non-miraculous Christianity," entitled *The Spirit on the Waters*. Of the Bible miracles he says: "The weakness of the positive evidence and the strength of the negative evidence, and in many cases the extreme ease with which they can be explained, without resort to miraculous causes, forced me to the conclusion that they are as historically false as the spiritual claims of the Bible are true." So Dr. Abbott holds on in some sort of way to truths that were backed up by falsities.

The *Academy* (March 13) says: "To the late Dr. Cobham Brewer all journalists and a considerable proportion of the public owe a debt of gratitude for his admirable books of reference, *The Reader's Handbook* and the *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. Dr. Brewer's was a busy life. His *Guide to Science*, written in both English and French, has given thousands their first intelligent interest in the laws of nature."

E. Pickard, Flushing, near Falmouth, announces the publication of vol. ii. of *The Hat Crusade*; price 2s. 6d., and 3d. for postage.

Jesus said: Woe to ye rich, and blessed be ye poor. The world, however, thinks otherwise; and Mr. Hubert Howe Bancroft has put its view into *The Book of Wealth*, which is, perhaps, the most costly book ever issued, the cheapest copy being \$1,000.

The publisher claims that nearly a million of dollars has been expended in this work, which has been in the course of preparation for the past three years. Each section of the book is accompanied by a series of etchings and reproductions in water-colors by well-known artists. An imaginative picture representing the restoration of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon is contributed, in water-color, by Thomas Moran. The Golden Horn of the Bosphorus, by C. I. W. Mielatz; the Taj Mahal, by C. A. Vanderhoof—which certainly is one of the wonders of the world, having taken twenty thousand workmen seventeen years to construct—are also shown.

The sub-title of *The Book of Wealth* is, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Distribution of the World's Resources and Riches, and a History of the Origin and Influence of Property, its Possession, Accumulation, and Disposition in all Ages and Among all Nations as a Factor in Human Accomplishment, an Agency of Human Refinement, and in the Evolution of Civilization from the Earliest to the Present Era." Its design is to show that wealth is the root of all good. All the crowned heads, from the Emperor of China to the Queen of Holland, have subscribed for the work.

The Lunatic and God.

The madman is one, incomprehensible both in the ends which he seeks and in the means which he takes to attain them—one whose desires and schemes are alike inconsistent and unfathomable. The superior genius is one whose ends we can understand and assign perfectly, but whose means for attaining them are inexplicable; inasmuch as his fertility of invention and originality of thought have enabled him to combine his operations in a manner never previously witnessed.

Now, both the ends which the deity proposes, and the means by which he pursues them, are alike above the comprehension of our finite intellects.—*Jeremy Bentham*.

Everywhere we find the rule to hold good, "Like people, like gods." The gods cannot be better than the people who make and who worship them. And as all these gods were the product of men or of people in their earlier, more ignorant, crude, and brutal state, it is but reasonable to expect that the gods, creeds, and religious systems of any people will be found inferior in character, more crude, brutal, and irrational than the people themselves.—*Harman*.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

It would be difficult to find a worse instance of savage barbarity than that recorded of David's treatment of the people of the cities of Ammon; how he brought them out and "cut them with saws and harrows of iron and with axes," and "made them pass through the brick-kiln" (1 Chron. xx. 3; 2 Samuel xii. 31). The purchase of Saul's daughter with one or two hundred foreskins of the Philistines (1 Samuel xviii. 25-27; 2 Samuel iii. 14) is another fact throwing a flood of light upon the savage nature of early Jewish customs.—"*Footsteps of the Past.*"

It is far more important to love your wife than to love God, and I will tell you why. You cannot help him, but you can help her. You can fill her life with the perfume of perpetual joy. It is far more important that you love your children than that you love Jesus Christ. And why? If he is God, you cannot help him, but you can plant a little flower of happiness in every footstep of the child, from the cradle until you die in that child's arms. Let me tell you to-day it is far more important to build a home than to erect a church. The holiest temple beneath the stars is a home that love has built. And the holiest altar in all the wide world is the fireside around which gather father and mother and the sweet babes.—*Ingersoll.*

What knowledge is of most worth? The uniform reply is—science. This is the verdict on all counts. For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is—science. For that indirect self-preservation, which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is—science. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance is to be found only in—science. For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is—science. Alike for the most perfect production and present enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still—science; and for the purposes of discipline—intellectual, moral, religious—the most efficient study is, once more—science.—*Herbert Spencer.*

There never was a time when poetry was so full of infidelity, when novels were so liberalistic, when literature was so rationalistic, when art was so classic and free from allegory, when the stage was so independent of pious communities, when the pulpit was so heretical, when the public press was so influential against religion, when universities, colleges, and schools were so much occupied with science, when philosophy, logic, reason, discovery, invention, enterprise, and every phase of human experience and human activity so thoroughly contradict the Church, the Christian Bible, and Christian theology, and when religion, creeds, theology, priests, hypocrites, extra-reverent citizens, and pious frauds in general, were so alarmed, rattled, and routed, and driven from pillar to post, as in this era of man, 297.—*R. K. Noyes.*

The bishops preach that it is as difficult for a rich man to get into heaven as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle; yet they enrich themselves as greedily and as carelessly as if they, at any rate, never expected to smell brimstone as a consequence.—*Bradlaugh.*

We will speak out, and we will be heard,
Though all earth's systems crack;
We will not bate a single word,
Nor take a letter back.

We speak the truth, and what care we
For hissing and for scorn;
While some faint gleamings we can see
Of freedom's coming morn.

Let liars fear, let cowards shrink;
Let traitors turn away;
Whatever we have dared to think,
That dare we also say.

—*Lowell.*

Wendell Phillips, the famous abolitionist, was once travelling northwards, when he was accosted by a tract distributor, who was going his rounds in the corridor-train. "My friend," said he, approaching Phillips, "may I inquire what your aim in life is?" "Well," says Wendell, "my object in life is to benefit the negro." "Then," replied the missionary, "why do I find you travelling due north; why don't you go south, where the negroes are?" "Hum, yes," drawled Phillips, "there's a good deal in that. What's your aim in life, may I ask?" "My aim in life, sir," replied the missionary, in a pompous voice, "is to save souls from hell!" "Ha!" retorted Wendell; "then what on earth are you doing in this train? Why don't you go to hell and save them?"

A GOOD LIE SPOILT.

It came to pass that Joshua,
When down by Jericho,
He lifted up his eyes and saw
A man he didn't know.
He had his sword drawn in his hand,
So Josh addressed him thus:—
"Say! art thou for our enemies,
Or doest thou fight us?"
The man said: "Nay; of Jahveh's Host
I am a captain true,
And as this spot is holy ground,
Friend Josh pull off your shoe."
Obedient to this command,
Good Joshua did so—
To find the tale's conclusion
You can "go to Jericho."

T. CLARK

PROFANE JOKES.

MISSIONARY—"I had a very dear friend who came to your island long ago to labour among you—the Rev. Mr. Paddington. Ah! he was a delightful man!" Umbobo (the savage chief)—"Delightful is not the word, sir. Um-um! He was delicious!"

The dominie said grace, and, when he ceased asking the blessing, the four-year-old daughter of the hostess, who sat opposite to the minister, looked up and said: "That's not the kind of grace my papa says." "No? What kind of grace does your papa say?" asked the preacher. "Why, he came home last night, and when he sat down to the table he just said, 'Good God! what a supper!'"

A colored deacon gave the new minister some valuable advice, and it will apply to the clergy generally: "You can talk on most any subject," he said, "but if you want to keep peace in this church you mus' tech the Ten Comman'ments very lightly."

The sky-pilot told the dying trapper that religion was "good at all times, for the young and the middle-aged; and when a man got to be old, infirm, and lame, its worth could not be told." At this the eyes of the sick man brightened, and, forgetting his weakness, he said, fervently: "I know something that beats it all hollow for lameness, and that is pure skunk's grease, without a blanky blank particle of lard in it. I've got it to sell at \$1 a pint."

Bacon—"I see they've put a sounding-board back of the minister's pulpit. What do you suppose that's for?" Egbert—"Why, it is to throw out the sound." Bacon—"Gracious! If you threw out the sound, there wouldn't be anything left in the sermon."

Philip II., King of Spain, sent, in 1586, a young nobleman to congratulate Sixtus Quintus on his accession to the throne of St. Peter. This Pope, disgusted that Philip, this most Catholic king, should have sent him so young an ambassador, could not refrain from exclaiming: "Are men so scarce in your master's kingdom that he can only send me a beardless youth as a representative?" To which the proud hidalgo immediately replied: "Your holiness, if my master, the King, had thought that merit consisted in a long beard, he would have sent you an old billy-goat, and not a gentleman like myself."

An Irish undertaker, although fairly educated, could not for the life of him make the figure "eight." One day he had to make the funeral arrangements for a young man named Pat Murphy, who died at the age of twenty-eight. "Now," says he, "begorra, how am I to put his age on the plate? Let me think. Four fives are twenty, four sixes are twenty-four. Bedad, I have it: four sevens are twenty-eight." He then cut the plate thus:—

"PAT MURPHY.
Departed this Life
January 26, aged 7777."

The relatives were too grieved to notice the inscription, and all went well until the priest was performing the burial service. Said he: "My dear brothers and sisters, we are gathered together to pay our last respects to our departed brother, Pat Murphy. He was cut off in the bloom of youth, in the prime of joy. His age was only—(looking at the coffin)—what!—seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven! Begorra, how did he manage to survive the Flood?"

Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.

—*J. R. Lowell.*

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, G. W. Foote, "The Bible and the Koran."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): Bruno's Birthday—6, Tea; 7.30, R. Forder, "Bruno"; 9, "Colleen Bawn," by Dramatic Class.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Watts, "Sin and Secular Salvation."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, Mrs. Gilliland Husband, "Ethics and Social Reform."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Athenæum, Camden-road, N W: W. R. Washington Sullivan, "The Ethical Aspect of Punishment."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Voltaire."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Emerson."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): R. Rossetti—11.30, "Is the Bible the Word of God?" 3.30, "Christianity: Past, Present, and Future."

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Thatcher, "The Dignity of Matter."
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Chilperic Edwards, "The Monuments and the Bible." Illustrated by diagrams.
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—G. Wise, "Facts and Phenomena of Spiritualism"; 6.30, T. MacLeish, "Some Notes on the Life of Jesus."
LEEDS (Compton's Hotel, Briggate): 7, Members' meeting; important discussion.
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Annual general meeting.
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen—11, "Science and Socialism"; 3, "The Iniquities of a State Church"; 6.30, "God and the Devil in the Light of Evolution."
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): H. Snell—11, "What is the Bible?" 7, "Charles Bradlaugh: Atheist and Reformer." Lantern views.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): E. Evans—3, "Minerals and Mining: How and Where Metals, etc., are Obtained"; 7, "Prehistoric Man in Europe: His Works, and What we Learn from Them." Lantern illustrations. Tea at 5.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—March 21, Manchester; 28, Bradford.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—March 28, Athenæum. April 4, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Hammersmith. May 2, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Kilburn. 9, m., Clerkenwell. 28, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham-rye. 30, e., Edmonton.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 18 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

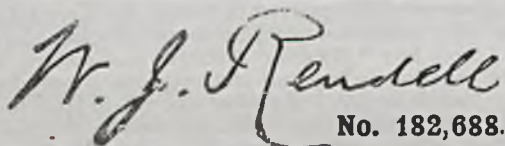
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