

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## BLOOD! BLOOD! BLOOD!

WHILE the pulpits are indulging in the usual Easter cant about the crucified and risen Redeemer, the Savior of the World, and the Prince of Peace, all Europe is quivering with excitement, and the fever of war is in the very air of the greater part of Christendom. Never before did the world present such a spectacle. Modern armies dwarf those of antiquity into insignificance, and their powers of destruction are enough to make them smile at the valor of the Roman legions. Europe is one vast camp. Millions of soldiers grasp arms, and listen for the call to battle; and who knows how soon the dogs of war may be unleashed by the "sovereigns and statesmen" who still, in spite of democracy, control the destiny of the people?

Greece, the smallest of European kingdoms, has been infected with the general madness. She has a population of about two millions and a quarter, scattered over an area of twenty-five thousand square miles. Her income is about five millions a year, and her national debt about thirty millions, for the most part incurred in idle extravagance. Her capital, Athens, has a population of less than a hundred and twenty thousand, and she has only three other cities with more than thirty thousand inhabitants. Yet her standing army is little short of thirty thousand men, while her reserves amount to over a hundred thousand. She has also indulged in the costly luxury of ironclads and gunboats; and, in order to pay for all these things, she has practised the fine art of financial repudiation.

All these Christian powers are alike in the mad race of militarism, and nothing could be more condemnatory of the influence of Christianity on civilization, and on its most vital interest—namely, Peace—which is the primary condition of industrial and popular progress.

With her relatively large army, and her relatively prodigious navy, Greece has been tempted into an impossible adventure. She has also been egged on by hot-headed friends in other countries, many of whom imagine that the righteousness of a cause is a sure guarantee of its success. So optimistic is the sentiment of those who are nursed in the belief in Providence!

Greece has forgotten that she owes her independent existence to the assistance and protection of greater Powers. When she holds up her hands in horror at the idea of a "peaceful blockade" of her own coast, she forgets that the first "peaceful blockade" in history was undertaken in her interest by England, France, and Russia in 1827, when the Turkish fleet was prevented from attacking her. Without any declaration of war, that fleet was annihilated at Navarino by the combined fleets of the friendly Powers. Mr. Gladstone's Government joined in a similar blockade of Greece, though with no such catastrophe, in 1886; and, in a circular letter to England's representatives abroad, Mr. Gladstone's Government dwelt upon the "ruinous sacrifice" by which Greece had "raised an army wholly

disproportionate to her population." Her troops were massed on the Thessalian frontier, and Turkey was obliged to put herself in a "condition of armed expectation." This was a policy of provocation, and the Powers interfered because it threatened "disaster to Greece and a wanton disturbance of the peace of Europe." Such were the opinions, the sentiments, and the policy of Mr. Gladstone's Government eleven years ago; and we have no hesitation in saying that they would be the same if a Liberal Government were in power to-day, for the two situations are almost identical, and all Europe has now, as then, an obvious interest in maintaining peace, and in preventing a general scramble for the territory of the Turkish Empire.

We do not mean that Greece is any worse than other Christian states. They are all alike in their thirst for aggrandizement, and their lust after fresh possessions. We only mean that Greece is not entitled to license and immunity, much less to praise and acclamation, because she happens to be a small state, and nobody likes to coerce her on that account.

Governments, and even nations, often advance other reasons for action than those by which they are really animated. It does not seem to us true that Greece is simply anxious about the freedom of the Cretans. Autonomy has been promised to them by the Powers, and it has been decided that Greek and Turkish troops should both leave the island. That nothing definite has yet been done is entirely owing to the presence of the Greek troops under Colonel Vassos, who swears that, sooner than leave, they will die to the last man. The Powers are naturally loth to use force against him, and the threatened blockade of the Greek coast has not been carried out. Yet all the time Greece has been calling up her reserves and massing her army on the frontier in face of Turkey. This was sure to lead to war; for what man in his senses could expect to see armies of different races and creeds, gathered on opposite sides of a mere geographical line, without a struggle being precipitated by passion or accident? Nor is this all. It seems clear enough that the Greek raiders, numbering at least three thousand, who crossed over into Turkish territory, did so with the active connivance of the Greek authorities. They were the advance guard of the Greek army; although, if they were unsuccessful, they would be disavowed. But this sort of cleverness is sure to defeat itself, and the astute raid has brought the Turkish army down like an avalanche.

The brave Greeks, for they seem brave enough, have been incited by appeals to their religious fanaticism. The raiding party that left Larissa, exactly a week before the declaration of war, waited for the arrival of two priests and a monk, who performed Mass; after which the party was addressed as follows:—

"Soldiers of the Cross of Liberty,—In the name of our great mother Hellas, who has called us together for this sacred struggle from all lands where Greeks live, we present you with these flags, blessed by the Holy Church."

A priest held up a magnificent gold cross, under which every man took the oath of allegiance.

Soldiers of the Cross! Yes, and on the other side were Soldiers of the Crescent, spoiling for a fight. And now Christ and Allah are once more opposed on the bloody battlefield.

What a pity it is that the gods cannot settle their quarrels up above, or down below, or in any other part of the universe but this poor little planet. On the top of every other difference among men comes their religious antagonism, and the old tragedy of Cain and Abel has been perennially enacted on the world's stage. The gods have been a universal cause of discord and division.

The Cross has gone down before the Crescent often enough, and it is likely to go down again. The Greeks have invited, and will probably get, a terrible beating. It is lucky for them that the Powers wait behind the scene, to prevent Turkey from treating Greece as she would otherwise treat a vanquished enemy.

The great thing to be done is to limit the struggle, and prevent a European conflagration. For the sake of humanity we hope this will be achieved.

But what a satire, after all, is the whole situation on our boasted civilization. Instead of cooling men's passions, religion only excites them. It has been the greatest disturbing force in human history. Like a volcano, it has belched out death and desolation. And its character never alters. It is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Looking back over its career on earth is like looking over a sea of blood. It is reserved for reason and humanity to bring about the reign of peace and brotherhood.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE DEVIL.

SHAKESPEARE has been claimed as an endorser of the superstition of his time, on account of his introducing witches, ghosts, and fairies in his plays. If this were so, it would not be wonderful. King James, to whom the Bible was dedicated, wrote a work on demonology, in which he said that witches kissed the Devil in imitation of God's showing his back parts to Moses (Exodus xxxiii. 33). After his time some of the most eminent men in English literature endorsed the Bible-founded belief in witchcraft. Sir Thomas Browne gave evidence at Norwich which led to the hanging of two poor women by Sir Matthew Hale. Dr. Henry More, Joseph Glanvil, Richard Baxter, and Meric Casaubon, all wrote against the Sadduceism which, denying the Devil and his angels, virtually challenged God and his. Addison believed "there is, and has been, such a thing as witchcraft," and John Wesley declared, "The giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible."

Shakespeare uses the supernatural, but his usage implies no belief, for he treats it as its master. We cannot prove he did not believe in fairies, ghosts, or witches, but we can show that he makes them subserve the purposes of his play. Mazzini observes:—

"The divine power has scarcely ever any direct intervention in the Shakespearean drama. The fantastic element, so frequently introduced, if closely examined, will be found never to depart from the individual sphere. His supernatural apparitions are all of them either simply personifications of popular superstition, or, like Caliban and Ariel, symbols of the duality of humanity; or, like the witches in *Macbeth*, the incarnations of human passions."

Note, however, that the weird sisters—

So withered and so wild in their attire  
That look not like the inhabitant o' the earth,  
And yet are on't—

are not emissaries of the Devil, but the visible promptings of criminal desires. They are more akin to the Scandinavian Norns, or the Greek Furies, than to the Christian agents of hell. They own allegiance, not to Satan, but to Hecate. Here Shakespeare has seized the essential fact

about witchcraft, to which sufficient attention has never been given. The stamping out of witchcraft was the suppression of pagan rites which remained in Christendom until the seventeenth century. The worship of Hecate, with its lunar dances, survived in the "antic round" of the witches' Sabbat.

In his treatment of the belief in possession by devils Shakespeare shows himself to have been emphatically a Freethinker, who ridiculed the credulity of his times. He would deserve to rank among the liberators of mankind if only for his playing the devil with the Devil. The Gospel-supported belief in possession by devils was the occasion of much insanity, misery, and ill-treatment of those under its baneful influence. Persons seized with epilepsy or madness were pinioned, confined in the dark, and frequently flagellated, to whip the offending devil out of them. The treatment is alluded to in *Romeo and Juliet* (i. 2):—

Not mad, but bound more than a madman is;  
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,  
Whipp'd and tormented.

In the *Comedy of Errors* (iv. 4) is an amusing scene which further illustrates this. Dr. Pinch, as schoolmaster, is exhorted, as "a conjurer," to bring the alleged mad Antipholus of Ephesus back to his senses. Pinch says:—

I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,  
To yield possession to my holy prayers,  
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight;  
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven.

But all the saints in heaven do not avail, and Pinch declares:—

Mistress, both man and master is possessed;  
I know it by their pale and deadly looks.  
They must be bound, and laid in some dark room.

The scene between Malvolio and the Clown in *Twelfth Night* (iv. 2) further caricatures the New Testament-supported idea of demoniacal possession and exorcism. The clown, arrayed in gown and beard, pretends to be Sir Topas, the curate, and speaks to the devil within Malvolio: "Out, hyperbolic fiend! how vexest thou this man"; and when Malvolio pleads, "Good Sir Topas, do not think I am mad; they have laid me here in hideous darkness," replies: "Fie, thou dishonest Satan! I call thee by the most modest terms, for I am one of those gentle ones that will use the Devil himself with courtesy"; whereas the priestly exorcisers treated them contumeliously. In ridiculing possession by devils Shakespeare was virtually discarding the New Testament, which countenanced that belief; and in jeering at exorcisms he was flying in the face of the canons of the Church of England, which recognize the exorcism of demons, but prohibit it to any but priests.

Another satire on the belief in possession is found in *King Lear*, where Edgar pretends to be mad and possessed. He says (ii. 3):—

My face I'll grime with filth,  
Blanket my loins; elf all my hair in knots.

Lodge, in his *Wits Miserie*, describing a devil whom he names Brawling-Contention, says: "His ordinary apparell is a little low-crowned hat with a fether in it like a fore-horse; his haire are wild and full of elves locks, and withy for want of kombing." Edgar says:—

"This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet; he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth."

St. Withold footed thrice the wold;  
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;  
Bid her alight,  
And her troth plight,  
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

Then he says:—

Peace, Smolkin, peace, thou fiend.....  
The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman;  
Modo ho's called and Mahu.

And later on:—

"Frateretto calls me; and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend."

The very names of the evil spirits which Edgar pretends beset him Archbishop Harsnet, in his *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), tells us were those of the demons alleged to have been exorcised by Popish priests. Among these were Smolkin, Modo, Mahu, Frateretto, and

Flibbertigibbet. No way of ridding the mind of belief in these "foul fiends" could be more effective than putting them into the mouth of one whom the audience knows is only pretending to be mad. And yet some people pretend that Shakespeare was a Roman Catholic! When Edgar describes the Devil, he depicts an incredible monster:—

Methought his eyes  
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses;  
Horns welk'd and waved like the enridged sea.

The many stories of devils with awful names are again satirized when, in 1 *Henry IV.* (ii. 4), Falstaff alludes to Glendower as "he of Wales, that gave Amaimon the bastinado, and made Lucifer cuckold, and swore the Devil his true liegeman upon the cross of a Welsh hook." Ford, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (ii. 2), says: "Amaimon sounds well, Lucifer well, Barbason well; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends." In *Henry V.* (ii. 1) Nym tells Pistol: "I am not Barbason; you cannot conjure me."

Shakespeare satirizes, too, the belief that the Devil could transform himself into any shape—a belief countenanced by Paul, who says (2 Cor. xi. 14) that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. Thus Prince Hal (1 *Henry IV.*, ii. 4) tells Falstaff, in the character of the King: "There is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of a fat old man.....That villainous, abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan." So in the *Merchant of Venice* (iii. 1), on the approach of Shylock, Salanio says: "Let me say amen betimes, lest the Devil cross my prayer; for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew." In *Othello*, Iago tells Brabantio to seek his daughter, "or else the Devil will make a grandsire of you," owing to the Devil being regarded as black, and as acting the part of an incubus.

In the *Comedy of Errors* (iv. 3) Antipholus of Syracuse says to a courtesan, "Satan! avoid! I charge thee, tempt me not." His servant Dromio says, "Master, is this mistress Satan?" A.—"It is the devil." D.—"Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's dam; and here she comes in the habit of a light wench; and thereof comes that the wenches say, 'God damn me'; that's as much as to say, 'God make me a light wench.' It is written, 'they appear to me like angels of light: light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn; ergo, light wenches will burn.'" And when she asks him to "mend our dinner," Dromio says: "Master, if you do, expect spoon meat, or bespeak a long spoon." A.—"Why, Dromio?" D.—"Marry, he must have a long spoon, that must eat with the Devil." In *Love's Labor Lost* (iv. 3), too, we have: "Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light"; and Constance, in *King John* (iii. 1), tells the Dauphin, "The Devil tempts thee here in likeness of a new, untrimmed bride." Hamlet pauses lest

The spirit that I have seen  
May be the devil: and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me.

Here, giving the superstition of the time, our dramatist also shows its occasion, in weakness and melancholy. Further light on the devil is given when Cassio, in remorse for his drunkenness, says (*Othello* ii. 3): "O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let me call thee—devil!" and, giving at once the rational true and poetic meaning of the word, he says: "It hath pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil, wrath; one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself." And yet again: "Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil." Thus does Shakespeare refine the old savage belief in a devil into the actuality which works evident woe among mankind. So in *Triolus and Cressida* we have the devil as a metaphor. "How the devil, Luxury.....tickles these together." That the devil is only evil spelled with a d—as god is good with one o—we may see from the exclamation, "I the name of evil" (*Winter's Tale*, iv. 2), which is equivalent to "In the devil's name."

J. M. WHEELER.

A Scots border yarn tells how a friendless wanderer, on a black night, after vainly applying for shelter at almost every door in the border village, at last exclaimed, in despair, "Are there no Christians here at all?" only to be bucolically told: "Na, ma wummun, we're a' Johnstones an' Jardines hereaboot."

## THE DECAY OF ORTHODOXY.

FORTUNATELY for the intellectual progress of that portion of the human race where Christianity has for ages exercised a deteriorating influence, its decay has become an accomplished fact. The orthodox belief in its "divine origin," in the practicability of its teachings, and in its influence for good, is no longer entertained by many prominent members of the faith. It is admitted that other systems, apart from Christianity, contain ethical teachings as pure and as lofty as any that can be found in that particular system; while certain of its doctrines, which were once regarded as essential to the "spiritual" welfare of mankind, are now entirely discarded. The old conceptions as to its nature and requirements, held most tenaciously a few years ago, are at the present day abandoned. This decadence is recognized by Christians themselves. The *Rock*, an ardent exponent of the orthodox faith, says in its issue of March 26: "To those who watch the drift of events within and outside our Church, her future seems to grow darker and darker." The Rev. John Page Hopps, writing to the *Christian World* of February 18, states that the two books, *The Bible and the Child* and *How to Read the Bible*, recently published, "absolutely surrender the whole position of orthodoxy." Dean Farrar observes that "everyone should be a little ashamed and afraid to be of those who are the last to give up their allegiance to opinions which have long become naturally obsolete.....A study of the past shows us that it has been one of the chief duties of each age in succession to cast off the slough of old ignorance" (*The Bible and the Child*, pp. 8, 9). These admissions are gratifying to Freethinkers, and they afford excellent testimony to the success of Secular advocacy. Hardly a week passes but the religious papers announce fresh departures from the faith as it is said to have been "once delivered to the saints." This steady and continual decay of orthodoxy is a tribute to the power of modern thought, and a lasting benefit to mental freedom, which is the cardinal principle of Freethought.

It is frequently asserted by the friends of the Church that man is a religious being, and that the orthodox faith is necessary to his welfare in this life, and to his happiness in "the life to come." Now, supposing these assertions were true, there is the fact that no unanimity of opinion exists as to what orthodoxy really is. From the inception of the Christian system, it has always been a disputed point as to which of the many religious sects hold the "right opinion," which is the true signification of the word "orthodoxy." It is true that Archbishop Whately said that the term, "in popular language, means conformity to what is generally received as the right faith." But it must not be forgotten that what has been "generally received as the right faith" in one age has been condemned as being wrong in another. The same truth applies to different nations to-day, for what is designated orthodoxy in some countries is deemed heterodoxy in others. Roman Catholics consider that they are really orthodox, because in their own estimation they are, of all believers, "sound in doctrine." The Protestants, however, will not admit this claim upon the part of the Catholics, inasmuch as members of the "Reformed Church" contend that they are the recipients of the "right faith." It does not matter which of these two contending religionists may be thought correct, for it is evident that the "orthodoxy" of each admits of endless contention, that some of its features are beyond comprehension, and that there is no reasonable ground for anticipating that any uniform conclusion can be reached by argument. Mankind in general have not adopted any one religious opinion. So long as the mentality of the human race is constituted as it is, uniformity of opinion upon speculative subjects will be impossible. This fact is exemplified nowhere more forcibly than within the various Churches. Disintegration has there set in, and the longer it continues the less likelihood will there be of establishing such a uniform belief as orthodoxy demands.

Taking into account the results of modern research, we find that it has been the source of furnishing a greater amount of intelligence and happiness than has been acquired by orthodoxy during all the ages of its existence. The truth is, the once popular Christian faith never afforded either intellectual or moral aid that could stand the test of impartial examination. The main cause of this, no doubt, can be ascribed to the erroneous view which was enter-

tained for centuries—namely, that orthodox teachings were essential to the proper development of the highest qualities of human life. It is argued that unbelief deprives man of "something" which satisfies his intellectual and moral nature. But even if this were true, which it is not, it would not follow that orthodoxy was that "something." Before such an assumption could be verified, it would have to be shown that orthodoxy gives an interpretation of nature and human life in harmony with knowledge and experience. But this is just what it does not do, for orthodoxy is discredited and abandoned in proportion to the advancement of new discoveries and their application to the social organism. All the reliable and well-attested interpretations of nature are natural, and not, as claimed by orthodox believers, supernatural.

The incompatibility of orthodoxy with the vigorous intellectual and ethical requirements of the present age must necessarily cause it to decay. It is useless for all practical purposes of secular life. It belongs to the dark and lethargic past, and it has no useful place in the enlightened activities of to-day. If belief in orthodoxy had been capable of promoting human happiness, how is it that no appreciable relief from suffering was known when it had full sway? Why do men and women now seek outside the Church for those elements of, and inspiration to, individual and national progress which they have failed to discover within the pale of orthodoxy? Simply because the faith has become effete, and is decaying more and more under the influence of the intellectual strength of the nineteenth century. It is now an admitted fact that no rational solution of the enigma of existence has ever been discovered or revealed by orthodoxy, which, instead of confining itself to what is known, has indulged in reckless assumptions and dogmatic affirmations in reference to the unknown, and has thus caused thousands of innocent, uninformed devotees to neglect the duties of life, and to become the victims of a direful superstition.

In spite of the pretensions of orthodoxy, the intelligent belief of the present age has been transferred from the vagaries and absurdities of theology to faith in, and reliance upon, the truths of science. And science has nothing in harmony with theology and its crude speculations. It represents methodical knowledge and the realities of existence. In the *Nineteenth Century* for March, 1880, the Bishop of Carlisle wrote: "I maintain that science is Atheism; that all physical science, properly so-called, is compelled by its very nature to take no account of the being of God, because, as soon as it does this, it trenches upon theology, and ceases to be science; that its investigations and reasonings are, by agreement, conversant simply with observed facts and conclusions drawn from these; and in this sense it is Atheism, or without recognition of God."

Now, as Secularists, we are not content with the mere decay of orthodoxy; we deem it our duty to endeavor to replace the defunct faith with principles that can be applied to the physical, mental, and general improvement of the human race. We intend to continue our efforts to educate the masses of the people, kept ignorant for centuries by the mental tyranny of Ecclesiasticism. The education on which we insist must be free, compulsory, universal, and secular. Those who want their children taught religion can arrange for this at home, or elsewhere, out of school hours; the teaching for which the nation provides must be of subjects which all the nation recognizes as useful, and these subjects are strictly secular. We have to remove all legal and other disabilities founded on sex. Although the Christians are fond of boasting that their religion has elevated woman, we know that the New Testament, as well as the Old, distinctly proclaims her inferiority and subservience to man. With our belief that all human beings have an equal right to the full development and the free exercise of their faculties, we are bound to open to women as to men all spheres of activity. Women will succeed in those for which they are fit, they will fail in those for which they are not fit: it is waste of time to discuss beforehand their fitness or unfitness for this or that; it is absurd as it is unjust to hinder them from trying at what they will.

We have to promote sanitation in every direction—the provision of pure air, pure water, pure food, sufficient house-room for even the poorest classes. We have to do our utmost to extend and improve the cultivation of science in general, and all the useful arts which are nur-

tured by science; and especially we have to further both in theory and practice the doctrines of sociology, in order that the just relations of man to man and society may be determined and established in fact, and the present anarchy and hostility between the classes of the privileged and unprivileged may be destroyed, and merged into a free and fraternal harmony. We have to endeavor to convince our fellow-creatures that the real object of existence should be to learn how to live well; and that this can only be accomplished by developing our physical organization, cultivating our moral sense, and training our intellectual faculties. We have to enforce the truth that all the real wants of human nature are comprised under the heads of physical, moral, intellectual, social, political, domestic, and emotional requirements of mankind, and that all these requisites are supplied by Secularism, without the aid of any theology.

CHARLES WATTS.

## INGERSOLL'S NEW LECTURE.

### ON "TRUTH."

(Continued from page 245.)

#### MIRACLES NOT TO BE BELIEVED.

It is impossible to establish one miracle except by another; and that would have to be established by another still, and so on without end. Human testimony is not sufficient to establish a miracle. Each human being, to be really convinced, must witness the miracle for himself.

They say that Christianity was established—proven to be true—by miracles wrought nearly two thousand years ago. Not one of these miracles can be established except by impudent and ignorant assertion—except by poisoning and deforming the minds of the ignorant and the young. To succeed, the theologians invade the cradle, the nursery. In the brain of innocence they plant the seeds of superstition. They pollute the minds and imaginations of children, they frighten the happy with threats of pain, they soothe the wretched with gilded lies.

This perpetual insincerity stamps itself on the face—affects every feature. We all know the theological countenance—cold, unsympathetic, cruel, lighted with a pious smirk, no line of laughter, no dimpled mirth, no touch of humor, nothing human.

This face is a rebuke, a reprimand to natural joy. It says to the happy: "Beware of the dog"—"Prepare for death." This face, like the fabled Gorgon, turns cheerfulness to stone. It is a protest against pleasure—a warning and a threat.

You see every soul is a sculptor that fashions the features, and in this way reveals itself.

Every thought leaves its impress.

The student of this science of theology must be taught in youth—in his mother's arms. These lies must be sown and planted in his brain the first of all. He must be taught to believe, to accept without question. He must be told that it is wicked to doubt, that it is sinful to inquire—that faith is a virtue, and unbelief a crime.

#### HOW MAN IS MISLED.

In this way his mind is poisoned—paralyzed. On all other subjects he has liberty, and in all other directions he is urged to study and think. From his mother's arms he goes to the Sunday-school. His poor little mind is filled with miracles and wonders. He is told about a God who made the world, and who rewards and punishes. He is told that this God is the author of the Bible—that Christ is his son. He is told about original sin and the Atonement, and he believes what he hears. No reasons are given, no facts, no evidence is represented—nothing but assertion. If he asks questions, he is silenced by more solemn assertions, and warned against the devices of the Evil One. Every Sunday-school is a kind of inquisition where they torture and deform the minds of children—where they force their souls into Catholic or Protestant moulds, and do all they can to destroy the originality, the individuality, and the veracity of the soul. In the theological seminary the destruction is complete.

When the minister leaves the seminary, he is not seeking the truth. He has it. He has a revelation from God, and he has a creed in exact accordance with that revelation.

His business is to stand by that revelation, and to defend that creed. Arguments against the revelation and the creed he will not read, he will not hear. All facts that are against his religion he will deny. It is impossible for him to be candid. The tremendous "verities" of eternal joy, of everlasting pain, are in his creed, and they result from believing the false and denying the true.

Investigation is an infinite danger, unbelief is an infinite offence, and deserves, and will receive, infinite punishment. In the shadow of this tremendous "fact" his courage dies, his manhood is lost, and in his fear he cries out that he believes, whether he does or not.

He says and teaches that credulity is safe and thought dangerous. Yet he pretends to be a teacher—a leader, one selected by God to educate his fellow men.

CHURCH SCOFFS AT SCIENCE.

These orthodox ministers have been the slanderers of the really great men of our century. They denounced Lyell, the great geologist, for giving facts to the world. They hated and belittled Humboldt, one of the greatest and most intellectual of the race. They ridiculed and derided Darwin, the greatest naturalist, the keenest observer, the best judge of the value of a fact, the most wonderful discoverer of truth that the world has produced.

In every orthodox pulpit stood a traducer of the greatest of scientists—of one who filled the world with intellectual light.

The Church has been the enemy of every science, of every real thinker, and for many centuries has used her power to prevent intellectual progress.

Ministers ought to be free. They should be the heralds of the ever-coming day; but they are the bats, the owls, that inhabit ruins, that hate the light. They denounce honest men who express their thoughts, as blasphemers, and do what they can to close their mouths. For their Bible they ask the protection of law. They wish to be shielded from laughter by the Legislature. They ask that the arguments of their opponents be answered by the courts. This is the result of a due admixture of cowardice, hypocrisy, and malice.

What valuable fact has been proclaimed from an orthodox pulpit? What ecclesiastical council has added to the intellectual wealth of the world?

Many centuries ago the Church gave to Christendom a code of laws—stupid, unphilosophic, and brutal to the last degree.

The Church insists that it has made man merciful and just. Did it do this by torturing heretics—by extinguishing their eyes—by flaying them alive? Did it accomplish this result through the Inquisition—by the use of the thumb-screw, the rack, and the faggot? Of what sciences has the Church been the friend and champion? What orthodox Church has opened its doors to a persecuted truth? Of what use has Christianity been to mankind?

CHURCH OPPOSES EDUCATION.

They tell us that the Church has been, and is, the friend of education. I deny it. The Church founded colleges not to educate men, but to make proselytes, converts, defenders. This was in accordance with the instinct of self-preservation. No orthodox Church ever was, or ever will be, in favor of real education. A Catholic is in favor of enough education to make a Catholic out of a savage, and the Protestant is in favor of enough education to make a Protestant out of a Catholic; but both are opposed to the education that makes free and manly men.

So ministers say that they teach charity. This is natural. They live on alms. All beggars teach that others should give.

So they tell us that the Church has built hospitals. This is not true. Men have not built hospitals because they were Christians, but because they were men. They have not built them for charity, but in self-defence.

If a man comes to your door with the small-pox, you cannot let him in, you cannot kill him. As a necessity, you provide a place for him. And you do this to protect yourself. With this Christianity has had nothing to do.

The Church cannot give, because it does not produce. It is claimed that the Church has made men and women forgiving. I admit that the Church has preached forgiveness, but it has never forgiven an enemy—never. Against the great and brave thinkers it has coined and circulated

countless lies. Never has the Church told, or tried to tell, the truth about an honest foe.

CHURCH ENCOURAGES SUPERSTITION.

The Church teaches the existence of the supernatural. It believes in the divine sleight-of-hand—in the "presto" and "open sesame" of the infinite; in some invisible being who produces effects without causes, and causes without effects; whose caprice governs the world, and who can be persuaded by prayer, softened by ceremony, and who will, as a reward for faith, save men from the natural consequences of their actions.

The Church denies the eternal, inexorable sequence of events.

What good has the Church accomplished?

It claims to have preached peace because its founder said: "I came not to bring peace, but a sword."

It claims to have preserved the family because its founder offered a hundred-fold here, and life everlasting, to those who would desert wife and children.

So it claims to have taught the brotherhood of man, and that the Gospel is for all the world, because Christ said to the woman of Samaria that he came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and declared that it was not meet to take the bread of the children and cast it unto dogs.

In the name of Christ, who threatened eternal revenge, it has preached forgiveness.

POOR OPINION OF PREACHERS.

Of what use are the orthodox ministers?

They are enemies of pleasure. They denounce dancing as one of the deadly sins. They are shocked at the wickedness of the waltz, the pollution of the polka. They are the enemies of the theatre. They slander actors and actresses. They hate them because they are rivals. They are trying to preserve the sacredness of the Sabbath. It fills them with malice to see the people happy on that day. They preach against excursions and picnics, against those who seek the woods and the sea, the shadows and the waves. They insist that for the Glory of God husbands and wives who loathe each other should be compelled to live together. They abhor all works of fiction, and love the Bible. They declare that the literary masterpieces of the world are unfit to be read. They think that people should be satisfied with sermons and poems about death and hell. They hate art—abhor the marbles of the Greeks, and all representations of human form. They want nothing painted or sculptured but hands, faces, and clothes. Most of the priests are prudes, and publicly denounce what they secretly admire and enjoy. They pretend to believe in moral suasion, and want everything regulated by law. If they had the power, they would prohibit everything that men and women really enjoy. They want libraries, museums, and art galleries closed on the Sabbath. They would abolish the Sunday paper, stop the running of cars and all public conveyances on the holy day, and compel all the people to enjoy sermons, prayers, and psalms.

(To be concluded.)

THE DIFFERENCE.

WHEN the art of printing was first discovered, the monks and priests ascribed the invention to the Devil, and labored to suppress the sale of books made by the new process. The art of writing was credited to God. What passes as the early production of those ancient times is received as the Word of God. Both systems were, doubtless, stepping-stones to higher civilizations; but the Devil's invention has taken the lead, and the world is filled with learning in consequence. The difference: The books alleged to have come from the hand of God remain substantially the same for ever, though abounding in errors which would drive any other into obscurity. The Devil commenced in 1440 with making letters cut on bark, and pressed on paper by hand, using common writing ink. His system has improved day by day, without any period of rest, down to the present. Under its beneficent influence the world has advanced from almost savagism to its present enlightenment, the devotees of the older system having been ever active in trying to place obstacles in the way of progress. No one can guess the heights in knowledge the world would have attained had the Devil's discovery met with no obstruction.

—Progressive Thinker.

### SAVED OR DAMNED FOR A PENNY.

"Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God."  
 "Woe unto you that are rich!"  
 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."  
 "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow."  
 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth."

—JESUS CHRIST.

THE poor shall all be saved because they're poor;  
 The rich shall all be damned because they're rich;  
 So, make your calling and election sure—  
 And other folk's—by settling which is which.

Perhaps the Blessed Savior-Damner means  
 To save—or damn—the neither-poor-nor-rich;  
 Destroy, or give them neither "buns" nor "beans";  
 At any rate, He ne'er referred to "sich."

When Christ the Blessed Curser has consigned  
 The poor to heav'n, and all the rich to hell,  
 Perhaps the neither-poor-nor-rich will find  
 No place prepared for them—you ne'er can tell.

Perhaps some fiendish wretch, on judgment-day,  
 Whom Christ the Blessed Damner sends below,  
 Will prove that he'd been poor, then Christ will say:  
 "All right, my friend, then up to glory go!"

When Christ has told some noble soul to go  
 To heav'n above with Abraham to dwell,  
 Perhaps He'll learn he'd died well-off, and so  
 Will quickly roar: "Come back! and go to hell!"

If Christ be God—and means—as Scriptures teach—  
 To save the poor, and damn the rich, He knows  
 And always sees the line that limits each,  
 And notes when either o'er the limit goes.

That each is poor or not-poor, all agree;  
 We know that "be" and "not-be" must adjoin;  
 Thus, poor and not-poor ne'er can sundered be  
 By greater value than the *smallest* coin.

Beseech a Bishop, or the Lord, to state  
 The *most* the "poor" can own, for, who can tell?  
 A penny more or less will fix your fate;  
 A *minus* penny's heav'n; a *plus*, is hell.

Because a penny less, or penny more,  
 Divides the poor from not-poor; ponder wel  
 Ere adding e'en a farthing to your store!  
 A penny is the key of heav'n, or hell!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

### ACID DROPS.

GOOD FRIDAY was celebrated in many of the churches of Vienna by the laying of Christ in a beautifully-adorned grave. The Emperor himself, in the palace chapel, knelt down and kissed the figure of Christ on the mouth, and also the wounds in the hands, feet, and side. This scene of superstition was illuminated by the electric light. What a contrast! And what a symbol of this distracted age! Science is preparing us for the future, and Religion is pulling us back to the past.

The Rev. H. Westall, vicar of St. Cuthbert's, South Kensington, perpetrated some rare antics in his church on Good Friday. Approaching the front of the altar, he removed and unveiled the crucifix; and, raising it up so that all could see it, he exclaimed: "Behold the wood of the Cross." Laying it down, in a slanting position, he retired some distance, and bowed twice; then he approached the crucifix again, and knelt down and kissed it. A whole congregation of professed Protestants looked on at this tomfoolery.

Dr. Horton, of Hampstead, preached a Good Friday sermon on the Crucifixion. According to this gentleman, a tremendous struggle took place while Jesus hung upon the cross. The sin of the world warred against the love of God, but in the end the powers of evil were defeated. Well, *that's* all right. It is pleasant to know that Omniscience was not outwitted, and that Omnipotence was not beaten.

Mr. Gladstone sent a telegram to Colchester, where a

tablet to the memory of the most famous of Baptist preachers was being unveiled. The G. O. M. rejoices that "the memory of the Rev. Spurgeon's great gifts and high character is warmly cherished by a large number of his countrymen." When this is read by Colonel Ingersoll, he will laugh more than ever at the British delusion that Gladstone is a man of genius.

Mr. Spurgeon preached thousands of sermons, and most of them have been printed. Yet, in all the myriad pages he sent through the press, is there a single one that has the remotest chance of living in English literature? He possessed a certain liveliness, and was able to crack a joke, though most of his pulpit levities were more or less borrowed from older divines; but his mind was essentially commonplace, and he did not contribute one idea to the mental wealth of his age. Mr. Gladstone has been just as infertile in the region of ideas; and, as a theologian, he is about on a par with Mr. Spurgeon.

"Carados," in the *Referee*, complains very justly of the "cant" which is to be found in the report of the Theatrical Institute at Macready House. "I point to page eleven," he says, "where I read that an actress who was a Jewess received considerable kindness while ill at Macready House; that she came to the conclusion that Christianity, which manifested itself in such very practical ways, even to members of a different faith, must be a reality; that she began to pray, and that she *resolved to become a Christian*." "Carados" remarks that this is "a gross insult" to the religion of Mr. David James, whose executors are just paying over £500 to the Theatrical Institute. But he does not notice the rich absurdity of the expression, "she began to pray." It implies that Jews do *not* pray; also that everybody who *does* pray is sure to become a Christian.

Christians are the most barefaced bigots on earth. They thrust themselves into the administration of every charity, and use its influence and resources to advertise and promote their faith. And in committing this injustice they give themselves the most insolent and ridiculous airs. They do not openly say, "We are holier than you," but they very plainly say, "Come and be as holy as we." How curious it is that self-righteousness should be the peculiar failing of the professors of a religion which declares that no man can do any good of himself, and that there is none righteous, no not one! Christians go to church and call themselves miserable sinners; but they will not let anyone else call them so, unless he happens to be too big to knock down, or too powerful to contradict.

We have already recorded the "drunk" case in New York, in which the prisoner said he obeyed the teachings of the Bible, quoting Proverbs xxxi. 6, 7, and was instantly discharged. This case was the subject of a paragraph, a little later, in the *Glasgow Evening Citizen*. In another part of the same issue of that journal there was a report of a teetotal convention at Newcastle. Madame Sterling was one of the speakers, and at the conclusion of her address she broke out into song—"The Lord is my Shepherd." Her rich contralto voice naturally charmed the audience, but the incident was very funny when taken in connection with that New York case. "The Lord is my Shepherd," sings Madame Sterling. "Yes," adds the New York lusher, "and he leads unto the wine and the strong drink, where his poor sheep may swill until they forget their poverty and remember their misery no more."

Father Ignatius, preaching recently in the City of London, admitted that from the world's standpoint Christianity had been a failure, and even now had very little influence on the national, political, commercial, and domestic life of our land. We are pleased to chronicle the admission.

The pious young Czar of Russia has indulged in an act of "mercy." He has ordered that the prisoners sent to Siberia shall no longer trudge all the way, which usually occupies three months, but shall be conveyed by the railway. After all these centuries of Christianity in Russia, it would be surprising that such an act of bare humanity and decency remained to be done, if we did not know from history and experience that Christianity is compatible with any amount of barbarism.

"The Metropolitan of Athens," according to a Reuter telegram, "has ordered all the clergy to offer up prayers for the success of the Greek Army." No doubt similar prayers are being offered up for the success of the Turkish Army. Probably the deity will, as usual, be on the side of the biggest battalions.

There are many ways of attracting church congregations now-a-days, but few ministers would care to try the plan said to have been adopted by a Scottish divine in Melbourne. This gentleman has arrayed his male choristers in Highland dress, while the lady singers wear the costumes

seen in *The Lady of the Lake*. It is said that the church is crowded, which is a little difficult to understand when we are told that the hymns are sung to the music of the bagpipes. The man who defined the strains of the pipes as the musical equivalent to profanity was surely not a Scotchman.

Kitty Tingley, the veiled American Mahatma, who inherited the mantle of W. Q. Judge together with his Mahatma apparatus, denounces Annie Besant's Theosophy as of an inferior brand. A meeting was held to receive her on her return from a trip round the world, and a Mr. Herbert Crooke is reported as speaking as follows: "In looking about this magnificent building, it occurred to me that it could nawn hawve bean built without a centre. Cawrrying this thought awnward, it awcurred to me that this great universe in which we live could nawn hawve bean formed without a centre. Cawrrying this awn further, I feel that it is plain that Theawosophy could nawn hawve bean made without a centre. H. P. Blawvawtsky made it, awnd W. Q. Judge waws the centre, awnd now Kawtherine A. Tingley is the centre of this new crusade. You see, everything must hawve a centre." This concluded the speaking. The meeting ended with an informal reception, all the Theosophists crowding upon the stage to shake hands with Mrs. Tingley and the other crusaders.

At Mrs. Besant's rival meeting at Brooklyn Philosophical Association she told of a case where a person recovering from a trance had picked out one piece from a number of blank papers, and had read what had been "thought upon it" by another person during his trance. He, however, was unable to read the paper when the side which had not been thought upon was turned to him. This was a demonstration of the immortality of the soul. She then told the philosophers how they could get outside of themselves. They were to eat nothing but rice for a fortnight, drink no alcohol, and then concentrate their thoughts. If all this advice were followed, Mrs. Besant prophesied that some day, unexpectedly, the person doing so would find himself looking down at his body and wondering how he came to think that old thing was himself all these years. She told of her own surprise when she herself first got outside of herself and looked at herself, but said she had now got quite used to the experience.

J. Warwick, an ex-president of the Association, and an old friend of Mrs. Besant's, thanked her for her past work in the cause of Liberalism in England, but referred to her address as an "intellectual curiosity."

Mr. T. B. Wakeman, president of the Liberal Club, deplored Mrs. Besant's defection from the Liberal ranks, and said that if it would do any good he would cry over it. He said Mrs. Besant had laid aside science, and added: "The Asiatic mildew which the venerable lady is voicing is one of the greatest curses of the human race." We are inclined to echo friend Wakeman's words.

Fasting as a means of seeing visions dates back to the earliest times. Savages often had to fast, and in these fasts, seeing visions, often of game, they deemed themselves inspired. All savage tribes adopt fasting for the purpose of attaining ecstasy—standing outside of themselves, as Mrs. Besant calls it—or, in popular phraseology, going out of their minds. Fasting was the prelude to entering upon the calling of a medicine-man among the North American Indians. The Hindus of to-day claim by their long fasts to triumph over the laws of matter. Too many of them get outside of the body, in the sense of leaving their unfed bodies to decompose.

Dr. E. B. Tylor remarks, in his *Primitive Culture*: "Among the strongest means of disturbing the functions of the mind, so as to produce ecstatic vision, is fasting, accompanied as it so usually is with other privations, and with solitary contemplation in the desert or the forest." In this condition he gets outside himself, and sees visions about. Having, perhaps, by stern necessity, learnt the secret of intercourse with another world, he has but to reproduce the cause to renew the effect.

A curious rite of fasting is described in the laws of Manu, which all true Hindus regard with veneration. It consists in taking fifteen mouthfuls of rice at the full moon, diminishing the consumption every day by one mouthful for the waning half of the lunar month, until the quantity is reduced to nil at the new moon, and then increasing it in like manner during the fortnight of the moon's increase. By so doing the devotee assimilates herself to Luna Melancholia.

A missionary in Burmah, sick of the vegetarian hospitality with which he was received, became subject to a great meat hunger. He sought to buy a pig, but the inhabitants would not sell one to be made food of. One morning, in desperation, he shot one. His interpreter said: "You've done a rare morning's work." "Yes," said he; "I've provided

myself with food for a week." "And," said the interpreter, "you've killed all hope of introducing Christianity into this district for the rest of your life."

The Bolton *Evening News*, in an article on Easter-tide, speaks of Christmas and Easter as great Christian landmarks. If our pious contemporaries were a little better informed, it would know that these two commemorations, in all but name, were ancient before Christianity was born. We are glad to note, however, that the *News* is aware of the "aggressive" character of the "forces of irreligion and scepticism." We only laugh at its idea that the people at large are to be elevated by swearing off holidays and going to church at these seasons of the year. Of course the editor of the *News* may like to hear how sinful he is, and to be warned against hell and damnation; but tastes differ, and people quite as good as himself prefer to hear the waves break upon the shore, or to see the blue sky and the green landscape melt into each other on the far horizon.

The fact is everywhere conspicuous, says the New York *Outlook*, that when a Jewish child separates from the religion of his fathers he generally becomes a Materialist, rarely a Christian. It is only a short time ago that Warszawiak, a "converted" Jew, engaged in missionary work in this city, was dismissed by the society that employed him. The grounds of complaint were both moral and religious, and the *American Hebrew* states that only persons of this type will engage as missionaries to their fellow Israelites.

Bishop Sullivan, of Toronto, censures Mr. Goldwin Smith's latest book as harmful, no doubt because it lets the cat out of the bag, tail and all. The Bishop plays the old game as a Christian controversialist. He says that Mr. Goldwin Smith's objections were met two thousand years ago, which is a century at least before Jesus Christ was born. It is very interesting to read that Christianity was discussed before his nativity.

Nothing could be sillier than to say that an objection is ancient. Is not the doctrine it confronts ancient also? The only important question is this, Is the objection valid? Bishop Sullivan, if he has any courage—which is a different quality from arrogance—will explain how evolution is compatible with the fall of man. Until he does that, Christianity is apparently rotten in its foundation.

Revivalist Schiverea has been soul-saving at Winnipeg. In one of his exhortations he denounced bicycling by ladies, and the reason he gave is so filthy that we cannot pollute our pages with it. The wonder is that the fellow was allowed to leave the town without lynching. There is no dirt like that of a soul-saver when he gives his mind to the subject.

The New York Methodist Conference has just decided that no Methodist shall be allowed to ride to church—or elsewhere—on Sundays. This is an excellent regulation for fat and lazy Methodists, who never walk when they can ride. It will give them a little healthy exercise on one day in the week. But suppose they jib, and patronize the street cars; how is their wickedness to be detected? Will an army of spies be appointed to dog them from their homes? Will every Methodist, before entering church, be scrutinized to see whether he is perspiring? Or will he have to take his solemn oath that he has tramped to the House of God?

Rev. Dr. Farrar has written for immediate publication a sketch of national progress during the Queen's reign. We hope he has devoted a page to his own share of the progress, for he has got on remarkably well, and made a deal of money for a preacher of the glorious gospel of "Blessed be ye poor."

Sarah Bernhardt, the great French actress, has been playing the part of the Woman of Samaria. They say she played it very naturally, but she has not the qualification of having had seven husbands.

The Rev. Briscoe Wortham, a Church of England clergyman residing at Northolt, Middlesex, is a cool lord of creation. When caught riding his bike on a footpath, he said: "Oh, yes; I always ride on the footpath when the roads are muddy."

The Rev. C. L. Berry, a Presbyterian, is on trial at Pawnee Okla., on a charge of bank-wrecking. He was president of the Bank of Commerce, which failed last year with only sixty cents in its vaults, while the books showed that \$20,000 was due to depositors. When the condition of the bank became known, it was all the officers could do to keep a mob from lynching the minister.

On Sunday, March 21, the Rev. Isaac Newtown Phelps, rector of the Christ Episcopal Church, at West Islip, N.Y.,

resigned his rectorship in order to avoid a scandal, on account of his relations with several women of the parish.

In the same number of the *Boston Investigator* which reports the above we read that the Rev. J. A. Lee, pastor of the Third Baptist Church of Covington, Ky., was charged by the Cincinnati *Commercial Tribune* with having offered to procure a confession from the condemned murderer, Scott Jackson, for the sum of \$3,000. According to the evidence presented by this newspaper, the clergyman had acted as the spiritual adviser of the prisoner; and the former sought to enrich himself by selling the latter's secrets to the reporters of the daily press.

The *Morning Leader* has been rubbing Prophet Baxter's nose into some of his own muck. It cites from his circular of ten years ago the following: "Great European wars and revolutions between 1888 and 1891 will be the first leading prophetic event issuing in the formation of the now-existing twenty-three States or Kingdoms in the countries of Caesar's Roman Empire into exactly ten kingdoms confederated together—pre-figured by the ten-horned wild beast and ten-toed image of a man."

Those great wars and revolutions failed to come off. Baxter said: "Then a Napoleon will arise about 1891-2 as an Eleventh Little Horn." Baxter afterwards substituted Boulanger for Napoleon, but he failed to fulfil his part. The writer, too, refers to the translation of 144,000 living Christians. Ten years ago Mr. Baxter gave his final tip for this event to take place about Thursday, March 5, 1896. But the 144,000 living Christians did not rise to the occasion worth a cent, and so now the patient prophet plunges on March 12, 1903. It seems to be a case of "Perhaps, perhaps not," as Mr. R. G. Knowles used to sing. Mr. Baxter seems to have missed the mark a little too, when in this old leaflet he refers to the Universal War from October, 1896, to August, 1897. It did not come off, my good Baxter, and so the less you say about sporting tipsters who back wrong 'uns, the better.

We notice that the American Home Missionary Society, and the American Baptist Missionary Union, are facing a financial crisis of great severity, the former being in debt to the extent of \$180,000, and the latter \$306,000, thus making the total debt of the two associated societies \$486,000.

The Rev. P. Reynolds, of the Strict Baptist persuasion, has published a lecture in which he complains that Nansen is godless. He observes that in all his account of *Furthest North* there is not a solitary rendering of thanks to God, and no mention of immortality; after death being spoken of as Nirvana. In old days the deity was supposed to dwell at the North Pole and swing the planets round. Now-a-days godless travellers find no sign of his existence.

A clever *Star* writer gives an account of some funerals he witnessed. One of them was that of a poor man who was buried in hugger-mugger—to borrow a phrase from *Hamlet*. The officiating clergyman was short and beetle-browed, with extremely dirty hands and a not-over-clean face; who hurried through the service like a Parcel Delivery clerk racing through a long list of packages. Finally, the parson shut up his mouth like a rat-trap, and trudged away. And this is what followed at the graveside:—

"Then, from behind a gravestone, came a young laboring man, all yellow stained, reeking of bad shag which he had unconcernedly been smoking, and, seizing a worn shovel, cast a quantity of clay upon the thin coffin head. The sun, which had hidden his face behind a cloud in very scorn of such a minister, came genially forth again, and shone in all kindness right in the eyes of the pauper row. They burst out, all of them, into passionate weeping. So long as the Reverend Cold-heart was about they had apparently been too frightened to be natural; but now the sun and the grave-digger alone were left there (the undertakers were listening to a filthy story the driver was brilliantly relating), their pent-up sorrow burst in agonizing torrents, and I, who was behind a friendly monument, could not refrain from gentle, though moist, applause. 'Poor father!' said the children. 'Poor Jim,' said the broken old widow. 'Poor dears,' quoth your humble; 'poor dears. I wonder who he was; I'll ask 'em.'

"And I did.  
"He were a verger, sir, he were; and a God-fearing, honest man all his life, but he was took with the palsy and had to go to the union with all of his family,' answered John with a gleam of anger in his wet eye.

"'Had he a trade?' I inquired.  
"Oh! yes, sir, he were a bookbinder, he were, and worked for a Bible warehouse for two-and-twenty year!

"As they were being packed back into the last bus, I peeped into the grave, and found some of the heavy clay clods had already cracked and splintered his last parish shirt. A text of Scripture came into my confused head in this garden of peace—it was this: 'I have been young and

now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread!'"

The *Star*, unfortunately, still continues to rave over the Eastern question. In an Easter article it hoped for a "resurrection of the Cross in the East," and sang the praises of Greece for daring "to raise the Cross above the Crescent." Christ was also represented as looking down from Heaven with compassionate love upon Greece. All this religious twaddle in relation to a political problem makes one half suspect that the *Star* is temporarily in the hands of a fanatical Nonconformist minister.

"General" Booth received "numerous congratulations" on his sixty-eighth birthday. In a high-falutin' address to his "comrades"—all of whom are subordinates in his pay—he speaks of the Salvation Army as "one, universal, and indivisible." Evidently the "General" is getting very near God Almighty.

Mr. Arthur Clayden, writing in the *Daily News* on rampant clericalism, says that, at a recent series of confirmation services in Sussex, numbers of the children of our Nonconformist churches and Sunday schools were lured to the ceremonial by means which the honorable clergy of my earlier years would have scorned to adopt. A bright lass belonging to a Bible class conducted by the wife of a Presbyterian minister was, to the intense surprise and grief of her estimable teacher, thus beguiled. She had been tampered with by one of these clerical fanatics, and specially instructed to say nothing about it till the ceremony was undergone.

The Rev. H. Lindsay Young, vicar of St. John, Portsea, received a letter from the Bishop of Winchester, strongly objecting to his attending a meeting at Cosham in opposition to the spread of Ritualism in that parish. Mr. Young, however, went, and there reminded the Bishop that he had recently taken part in a procession at St. Agatha's, Landport, preceded by acolytes with lighted candles, and by so doing not merely aided lawlessness, but treated with contempt the decision of her Majesty's judges.

The Bishop of Bangor was seized with a fainting fit while holding a confirmation service in Bangor Cathedral; and Mr. Alfred Augustus Allen, justice's clerk at Poole, died suddenly in Parkeston Congregational Church. The deceased was conducting the service, and was in the act of prayer, when he was observed to totter, falling before the deacons could render assistance. Death, no doubt, was due to heart disease, and there is no such "judgment" in the matter as would be the case with the sudden death of an infidel.

Mrs. Viafora, an Italian woman of New York, who was about to become a mother, prayed that her child might never be born if her husband did not kill Rocco Di Sio, whom she disliked. For the sake of the child, and under the stimulus of the prayer, Viafora murdered Di Sio.

The embezzlement charges against the Rev. Father Burns, of Milford, Conn., have been compromised by his friends paying \$1,300, the amount of his alleged defalcation.

The *Light of Truth*, an American spiritist organ, says: "Dr. Lyman Abbott, who has been stirring up the dry bones of Moodyism by his lecture on Jonah, says that the Book of Jonah 'was written as a piece of satirical fiction to satirize the narrowness of certain Jewish prophets.' In *The Age of Reason*, second part, page 112, Thomas Paine, in alluding to the Book of Jonah, says: 'But, as it is already shown in the observations on the Book of Jonah and of Proverbs, it is not always certain which of the books in the Bible are originally Hebrew, or only translations from books of the Gentiles into Hebrew; and as the Book of Jonah, so far from treating of the affairs of the Jews, says nothing upon that subject, but treats altogether of the Gentiles, it is more probable that it is a book of the Gentiles than of the Jews, and that it has been written as a fable to expose the nonsense and satirize the vicious and malignant character of a Bible prophet or a predicting priest.' Quite a coincidence—or, is the great spirit of Paine pulverizing the false conceptions of Bible narrative through the mediumship of Rev. Lyman Abbott?"

### The Atonement.

Let us suppose a great prince, governing wicked, rebellious people. He has it in his power to punish; he thinks fit to pardon them. But he orders his only and beloved son to be put to a cruel death to expiate their sins, and to satisfy his royal vengeance. Would this proceeding appear to the eye of reason and in the unprejudiced light of nature to be wise, or just, or good? No man, except a parson, dares to say it would.—*Lord Bolingbroke.*



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

*Sunday*, April 25, Bristol-street Board School, Birmingham : at 11, "The Doom of the Gods"; at 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; at 7, "The Crescent and the Cross."

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 25, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road. May 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be closed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

T. O. D.—Many thanks.

S. N. ALDRON.—The Liberation Society exists for the purpose of exposing and disestablishing the State Church. Should not your postcard be sent in that direction? The "toll-bars" of the parsons are simply parts of the Church system. We fight against the system itself, chiefly, however, by attacking its doctrines, and thus undermining its foundations. Wherever there is much religion, it gets itself established in some way, if only by securing exemption from taxation. For our part, we see no essential difference between Church rates and Education levies, when the latter are paid over to denominational (say Wesleyan) schools.

F. RIDLER.—Shall appear.

ISAAC R. ADAMS (Cambridge, Mass.).—Pleased to receive your congratulations on the *Freethinker* as "one of the best papers published." Any Freethinker, in any part of the world, can join the National Secular Society, if he pleases. The minimum subscription is one shilling (twenty-five cents) a year. Of course a larger subscription is gladly received. The secretary's address is—Miss E. M. Vance, N.S.S. Office, 377 Strand, London, W.C., England. The other publication you mention is supplied by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

SHILLING MONTH (for Lecture Scheme).—C. Lamb, 1s.; Hipwell, 1s.; W. Stephens, 1s. *Per Miss Vance*: C. B., 2s.; A. Cayford, 2s. *Per H. Snell*: J. G. (South Shields), 2s. 6d.

S. MOURADIAN (Paris).—You have not read our articles with sufficient attention. We do not hold a brief for either Christianity or Mohammedanism; on the contrary, we are opposed to every form of religion. But when it is said that a Mohammedan is a devil, and a Christian an angel, we beg to differ. With regard to the Armenians, we not only deplored the massacre and outrage to which they were subjected, but denounced the Christian Powers for not checking the Sultan in his policy of assassination. We believe it is a fact that Holy Russia stood in the way of proper assistance to the Armenians. With regard to your other point, you will find on consulting history that the Mohammedans had a noble civilization before the Christians had any worthy of the name. What do you think is gained by calling Mohammed "a beast"? And as to the Armenians being Freethinkers to a larger extent than Englishmen, we can only say that Freethinkers do not believe in lying down to be slaughtered. There is one Armenian to every three Turks in Constantinople. Why did they not defend themselves? Because their religion had eaten out their manhood. If we had our way, we would sweep religion from the face of the earth. There would then be some chance for peace, justice, and human brotherhood.

*Secular Thought*, Toronto.—You reach us very irregularly. What is the reason? Your April 3 issue is the first we have received for several weeks. We are always glad to see the only paper which gives us any news of our Canadian brethren. May your shadow never grow less.

ALERT.—Shall appear.

E. LUCAS.—It is impossible to close, or clean, the mouth of the average Christian Evidence lecturer. What we suggest is this. If you hear the same fellow, or another, say that Mr. Foote robbed a dying man of £3, or any other sum, ask him to put it in writing, and get the signatures of two witnesses. The point shall then be decided in a criminal court.

J. F. HAMPSON.—Thanks. See paragraph. Perhaps you will see that the party concerned is supplied with a copy.

D. W.—Will try to find room.

ARTIST.—There is no necessary connection between art and Christianity, which has always been opposed, for instance, to the drama. Religions, when they are rich enough, patronize the arts that subserve their purposes, and those only. Brahminism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism, like Christianity, have used architecture to erect gorgeous temples. The Catholic Church, and the High Church in England, have used music as an attraction; but the Puritan party has frowned upon it as a device of the Devil. The Catholic Church only has patronized painting; yet the greatest painters of religious pictures, when they were not hired by popes and cardinals, had a remarkable itch for painting pagan subjects. Correggio painted a wonderful fine Descent from the Cross, but he painted a still finer Jupiter and Io, and more than one voluptuous Leda. The artistic faculty is a natural product; whether it works in one direction or another is dependent on circumstances, the principal of which is how to make a living and command social success.

We regret to hear that our veteran friend, Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, has had to take to his bed. There does not seem to be any immediate danger, but mortality is the lot of all men. We are pleased, though not surprised, to learn from a member of his household that the veteran is "brave, calm, and patient."

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Glasgow Branch, 11s.; General Fund, Glasgow Branch, 9s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Two Worlds—Freidenker—Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Blue Grass Blade—Humanity—Lucifer—Sydney Bulletin—Firebrand—Western Figaro—People's Newspaper—Daylight—New York Public Opinion—The Animal's Guardian—Herald of the Golden Age—Progressive Thinker—New York People—West Sussex Gazette—Freedom—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times.

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.

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

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.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

EASTER SUNDAY is not a good one for Freethought meetings, especially when the weather is fine; nevertheless, there was a good audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Easter on the Grecian Frontier; or, the Raising of the Fiery Cross." The lecture was listened to with deep attention. Mr. Schaller occupied the chair.

Owing to a hitch in the negotiations between the proprietor of the Athenæum Hall and a proposed tenant, the use of the hall will be continued for Sunday evening lectures, at least for some time. Mr. Charles Watts occupies the platform this evening (April 25), his subject being "The Sequel of the Cross." In this lecture Mr. Watts will deal with the point raised by M. Proudhon and others—namely, did Jesus actually die on the cross? The sequel of the belief in the story of the cross will be fully dealt with.

Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience last Sunday evening at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, when he lectured upon the question, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?" Mr. Watts criticized very severely the position taken by Christian expounders upon this subject, and his examination was warmly applauded by the audience, who gave him quite an ovation upon his resuming his seat. Mr. Hartmann presided. There was no opposition.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference will be held on Whit-Sunday in the Secular Hall, Leicester. As the Agenda has to be printed a fortnight beforehand, we hope the Branches or members who intend to move resolutions will send them in immediately, addressed to Miss Vance, N. S. S. office, 377 Strand, London, W.C. Those who neglect this precaution will only have themselves to thank if they are disappointed.

Branches all over the country should be making arrangements to be represented at the Conference. Leicester is centrally situated, and its general accessibility ought to secure a large attendance of delegates and individual members.

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (April 25) at Birmingham, which he has not visited for a considerable time. The room engaged for this occasion is the Bristol-street Board school. It has been used during the winter by the Sunday Society, but is now free for others. Mr. Foote's subjects are, or should be, attractive; the evening one being "The Crescent and the Cross," with special reference to the Cretan question and the Greco-Turkish war. We hope the Birmingham "saints" will muster in strong force, and bring as many as possible of their heathen friends with them.

The Humanitarian League proposes to hold a public meeting on Wednesday, May 5, at 8 p.m. in St. Martin's Town Hall, Charing Cross, to consider what practical steps can be taken to improve the treatment of London horses.

We hear from Germany that "S. E. Verus," the author of *The Comparative View of the Gospels*, noticed in our last number, is the pseudonym of our friend Dr. Voelkel, who has suffered more than once in Germany for his "blasphemy."

The April number of the *Open Court*, of Chicago, gives a good portrait of Schiller, with an article on "Schiller as a Prophet." A good deal of space is given to a paper on "Chicago and its Administration." There is also a brief paper on "Chicago Seventy-six Years Ago"; another on "G. J. Harney, the Chartist," and a brief paper on "Commercial Morality" by G. J. Holyoake.

The *Freethought Magazine*, of Chicago, says: "We never read the London *Freethinker* but we wonder why that paper has not a very large circulation in America. It deserves it."

April 23, Shakespeare's birthday, has often been suggested as a more convenient people's holiday than the shifting festival of Easter. At the time of Shakespeare's Tercentenary, 1864, this idea found definite expression. At that time, too, a workmen's memorial to Shakespeare, in the shape of a young oak, was planted by Phelps, the actor, on Primrose Hill. The tree is flourishing, but there is nothing there to record its occasion. Mr. Truelove, who is now in his eighty-eighth year, and who was one of the committee for celebrating the Tercentenary, has been writing to the papers and to the authorities relative to the placing of a tablet on the railings around the tree, to let all passers know that it is "Shakespeare's Oak." It was christened so by Mrs. G. L. Banks, with water from the Avon.

Counsel has finally advised that Mr. Foote's matured scheme for incorporating a society, which shall hold and use property for secular purposes, is *safe*. The solicitor with whom Mr. Foote was acting was satisfied of this before, but this final advice of counsel removes every obstacle to the last step, namely, the registration of the society. Every clause, every word, of the memorandum and articles of association has been most carefully considered; and unless a hitch occurs at Somerset House, which is not anticipated, the project will be carried to its completion before the date of the N. S. S. Conference.

A public debate between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee takes place in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, on the evenings of May 4 and 5. The subject for discussion is "The Existence of God." Mr. Charles Watts will act as chairman on one evening, and probably a representative Christian on the other.

### Hell-fire.

It was only in a cruel age that the doctrine of hell-fire could have acquired that hold upon men's minds which it had acquired in the Middle Ages. In recent times the doctrine has almost become universally discredited throughout the more enlightened portions of Christendom. Even those who maintain a belief in some kind of endless punishment no longer insist literally upon the lake of brimstone and fire that is never quenched. Now the doctrine of hell-fire has become thus universally discredited, not because it has been scientifically disproved, for science has neither data nor methods whereby to disprove such a doctrine; nor because it has been exegetically shown to be unsupported by Scripture, for the ingenuity of orthodox exegesis has always been equal to the task of making Scripture mean whatever is required; it has been discredited simply because people have become milder in their manners, and less used to enduring and inflicting physical pain. The doctrine shocks people's feelings, and so they refuse to believe it, no matter how the logic of the case may stand.—*Professor John Fiske*.

### Survivals.

Few things are so indestructible as a superstitious belief once fairly implanted in human credulity. It passes from one race to another, and is handed down through countless generations; it adapts itself successively to every form of religious faith; persecution may stifle its outward manifestation, but it continues to be cherished in secret, perhaps the more earnestly that it is unlawful. Religion may succeed religion, but the change only multiplies the methods by which man seeks to supplement his impotence by obtaining control over supernatural powers, and to guard his weakness by lifting the veil of the future. The sacred rites of the superseded faith become the forbidden magic of its successor. Its gods become evil spirits, as the devas or deities of the Veda become the daevas or demons of the Avesta; as the bull worship of the early Hebrews became idolatry under the prophets, and as the gods of Greece and Rome were malignant devils to the Christian Fathers.—*H. C. Lea, History of the Inquisition, vol. iii., p. 378.*

### LECTURING NOTES.

STANLEY, in the county of Durham, is a promising field for Freethought and Secular propaganda. Twelve months ago I visited it for the first time, and lectured on a Saturday evening to a crowded audience. Since then Mr. Cohen has given several lectures in the district to large and enthusiastic audiences, and, from what I hear, he has become quite a favorite among the friends, where he has recently done some excellent propagandist work through the aid of Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme. Mr. Snell is also active in the same locality this month in Freethought advocacy, and if the Lecturing Fund were adequately supported, other lecturers could be engaged in similar useful work. More and more am I convinced that the orthodox faith is losing its hold upon the thoughtful portion of the community, and now is the time that Freethought advocates should have the means of expounding their views to the general public. To be effectual, this must be done at meetings where admission is *free*. Unfortunately, the members of the various branches of the N. S. S. are not wealthy; therefore the pecuniary burden of carrying on the desirable propaganda falls upon the Lecturing Fund, which, it is to be hoped, will be sustained by those who have the means to do so.

The Stanley Branch of the N. S. S. has progressed marvellously within the last twelve months. It is composed of intelligent hard workers, who have the success of our movement at heart. Mr. T. Cruddas, as secretary, deserves all praise for his active devotion to the requirements of the Branch, and he is well supported by an energetic committee. The arrangements for the course of four lectures which I have just delivered in the Albert Hall, Stanley, were excellent. On the Saturday evening over five hundred persons were present, and on the Sunday night there were more than seven hundred attentive listeners, among whom a good number were ladies. Friends came from Newcastle, a distance of twelve miles; Chopwell, nine miles; Pelton Fell, five miles; and from other surrounding districts. As there are no trains in this locality on Sundays, the friends from Newcastle walked the twenty-four miles. This is Secular devotion, inspired, not by love of God, but by devotion to principle. No debate followed, although Christians who had opposed previous lectures were present. The audience at each meeting was very attentive, and applauded most heartily. I received many warm invitations to visit Stanley again at an early date. I was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson, whose kind hospitality I fully appreciated.

One pleasing incident of my visit was the introduction to an ex-local Methodist preacher, Mr. Johnson, who at my previous visit a year ago had been converted from "the errors of his ways" through listening to my lecture upon "Does Death End All?" Mr. Johnson is an intelligent, thoughtful man, and he made an excellent chairman at my Monday evening's meeting, when he gave his reasons for abandoning the Christian faith and becoming a Secularist. It is evident to me that, if our party had the means to compensate many preachers for their services to the Secular cause, they would not hesitate for a moment to leave the Christian fold. To possess the means of securing bread and butter is an important factor in the profession of Christianity.

The two local papers give lengthy reports of my two week night lectures, but they avoid any reference to the large meetings held on Sunday. The *Consett Guardian* publishes in its "Notes" some wretched doggerel "rhymes" on "Secularism," commencing thus:—

That Secularists here are going strong,  
I think you will agree;  
They give it out they won't be long  
In claiming liberty.

The writer of the "Notes" states, in reply to my invitation to the local occupants of the pulpit to meet me in debate when I next visit Stanley: "It is not probable that he will be debated with, for our ministers are alive to the fact that, while they have much to lose, he has absolutely nothing." There is more truth in this sentence than the writer supposed. In all well-conducted debates ministers "are alive to the fact" that they are the only losers, and that Secularists are the gainers. It is, however, a sad reflection upon either the Christian faith or its exponents

that in discussion they, by their own confession, stand to lose. *But such it is.*

The *Consell Chronicle* devotes a leading article and a special "Note" to my lecture upon "Atheism and the French Revolution"; but the editor in both instances avoids the point at issue, which is, "Was Atheism the cause of the excesses of the Revolution?" I gave ample evidence from the Parliamentary Blue Books, showing that the excesses were caused by the invasion of the allied armies of Christian Europe, under the leadership of the pious Duke of Brunswick. To this the editor makes no reference. I did not seek to "justify" my position simply by quoting Dr. Channing, whose evidence, by the way, is none the less valuable because he was "a Unitarian." I quoted Cobden, who said: "There is not a writer, whether French or English, who, in recording historically the dismal catalogue of crimes which from this time for a period of three years disgraced the domestic annals of France, does not attribute the ferocity of the people, and the atrocities committed by them, in a large degree to the proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick, and the subsequent invasion of the French territory.....But never was this feeling excited to such a state of frenzy as in Paris on the first news of the successes of the invading armies. The king, the nobility, the clergy, and all the opulent classes were suspected of being in correspondence with the foreigner; and the terrors of the populace pictured the Austrians already at the gates of Paris, and the Royalists pouring forth to welcome them and to offer their aid in the vengeance which was to follow. It was under this impression of treachery that the horrible massacre of the political prisoners, on September 2, took place. 'No doubt,' says Alison, 'can now exist that the interference of the allies augmented the horrors and added to the duration of the Revolution. All its bloodiest excesses were committed during or after an alarming but unsuccessful invasion by the allied forces.'" The same conclusion is arrived at by the *London Daily Chronicle*, which as recently as the 17th of the present month, in a review of Canon Liddon's sermons, says: "We must protest against Canon Liddon's assumption that Rousseau's teaching was responsible for the Reign of Terror. The Terror was not due to the teaching of Rousseau, but rather to the corruption of the Church itself. Everybody remembers that awful picture which Carlyle gives of the midnight revels in Paris, where high dignitaries of the Church were to be found in company with cut-purses and women of the town. It was the corruption of the Church which made men doubt the supernatural sanctions to which the Church appealed. The Terror, too, was largely due to the fact that under the influence of the Church the flower of the spiritual manhood of France had been either slaughtered or banished long before the outbreak of the Revolution, and consequently France in the hour of her need had not the moral force needed to counteract the influence of the party of violence." Let the editor of the *Consell Chronicle* ponder over these facts, and then, if he desires to say more upon the subject, what he states shall have my candid consideration.

I find great interest is manifested in the approaching Conference of the National Secular Society, which is to be held at Leicester on Whit Sunday, when important matters are to be discussed. In fact, I venture to allege that the business at that gathering will be of greater consequence to the Secular movement than any that has engaged the attention of delegates at any previous Conference. I hope the branches will be fully represented on the occasion. Freethought is extending on every hand, and I trust that practical measures will be adopted at Leicester to consolidate its forces and to extend its usefulness.

CHARLES WATTS.

The day of Paine's death was a day of judgment. He had not been struck blind or dumb; "Satan" had not carried him off; he had lived beyond his threescore years and ten, and died peacefully in his bed.....This immunity of Thomas Paine brought the deity of dogma into a dilemma.....Either Paine had to recant, or Dogma had to recant.....Paine's peaceful death, the benevolent distribution of his property by a will affirming his Theism, represented a posthumous and potent conclusion to the *Age of Reason*....."Thomas Paine," said President Andrew Jackson to Judge Hertell—"Thomas Paine needs no monument made by hands; he has erected a monument in the hearts of all lovers of liberty."  
—*Moncure D. Conway's "Life of Thomas Paine," vol. ii, ch. xxx.*

## HOW TO REACH NON-CHURCH GOERS.

THERE are a great many things that Christians do not understand. Some of them may be owing to the weakness of their understanding, and for these they are excusable; but a large proportion of their failures are due to a stubborn determination not to learn the reason for their ignorance. Among these last is the reason why people will not attend church.

In a magazine article the Rev. D. L. Moody, the evangelist, discusses the question of "How to Reach the Non-Church Goers." It is a melancholy fact, he says, that forty millions of people in the United States, or two-thirds of the entire population, never go inside a church. He thinks that, if Christians would go to such non-church goers, to their homes and places of business, and explain to them that they would be welcomed to the churches, and persuade them to come in and find out that they would be so welcome, and would learn about the gospel that is preached there, they would be glad to become regular attendants. He evidently thinks that all of these forty millions are entirely ignorant of the gospel, and that it is only necessary to interest them as to what it is to make them eager for more of it.

It never occurs to Mr. Moody, and the Christian mind generally, that many of these millions are better informed as to the gospel than he or any of them are, and that that superior knowledge is just what keeps them out of the church. The current of Christian thought runs in a very narrow channel, and, like Texas creeks in summer-time, it shrinks to almost nothing; these stay-at-homes have sat beneath the drippings of the sanctuary till it has become stale, flat, and unprofitable, and they decline to accept the invitation to the gospel-pools to slake their thirst with such stagnant waters. They have grown tired of listening to the same old story that has been told over and over again for a thousand years, while good books and Sunday papers lie open before them full of up-to-date knowledge that shows the falsity and childishness of that old gospel-story.

Why should a rational man immerse himself in a pew—much like a pig-pen—in a stuffy church, breathing over and over again the air which has been poisoned by carbonic acid from the lungs of hundreds of other people, all more or less afflicted with diseases, till outraged nature gives way to stupidity, and sleep dulls his ears to the platitudes that fall from the pulpit, when he can take a walk in the woods or fields and draw inspiration from fresh air and sunshine—to study nature in all the varied aspects that modern science has revealed to him? Or he may spend the day in happy, social communion with wife and children, or with friends, discussing the latest discoveries of science, and how they demolish the old dreams and speculations of long-dead saints and prophets that the ministers and evangelists are trying to impress upon their hearers in the churches.

A few days ago an exceedingly fresh young man called to see me, probably stimulated thereto by Mr. Moody's magazine article, and proceeded to exhibit how much his zeal exceeded his knowledge, by the usual unfounded assumptions of such callow Christians; such as that all great men have been Christians, and all the civilization in the world has been brought about by Christianity, etc. He did not know that before the advent of Christianity the world had built up a civilization in many lines superior to that we have achieved up to date; that our highest education even now is based upon the philosophy and literature of that old civilization of Greece and Rome. Christianity came and wiped out all that civilization, and reduced what is called the Christian world to ignorance and barbarism, in no degree superior to the Aborigines of America when first discovered. That we have recovered from the degradation that Christianity brought upon the world is due to the Mohammedan revival of learning, they having preserved all that was left of the ancient literature, and diligently cultivated it. From the Mohammedans civilization made its way into Europe, in the face of the most strenuous opposition of Christianity, and in spite of fire and stake, of rack and sword, and ecclesiastical denunciation.

As to the great men who have believed in Christianity, no doubt there were many. It is also true that there were many thousands of great men who believed in the gods of heathen Greece and Rome, and hundreds of other gods sprinkled along down the track of time, like milestones to mark the intellectual development of the human race.

Many great men have believed in ghosts and witches, and in demoniac possession by devils who could be transferred from men to pigs by command and exorcism. In fact, it is necessary to believe in such things now to constitute one a Christian; and just so far as any person gives up that belief, and repudiates the ghosts, witches, and devils, just so far he has become an infidel to the Bible and the teaching of the Church. But of great men who believe in Christianity in this last decade of the nineteenth century, they are as scarce as angel visits or hen's teeth. Why, in all the schools and colleges in our country that are dominated by Christians, their chief trouble is to find competent teachers who will not teach heresy; the last ten years have been as prolific of heresy trials among the professors in theological and sectarian institutions as were any ten of five hundred years ago.

Something like this I said to the young man, and added: "Now run home, young man, and study up on the history of the world and of the religion you profess, for you are woefully ignorant of both." He looked at me for a few moments, as if he was studying what next to say, and then came the final and conclusive argument: "I feel it my duty to say to you that you haven't many years to live, and you will go to hell." Well, said I, I consider myself lucky, in that you, and Christians like you, cannot send me there. If you had the power, you would send me there in two minutes. I will take my chances with God cheerfully, remembering what glorious Bob says, that heaven may have the best climate, but hell will certainly have the best society.

Now, this young man is not a minister, I take it, though I did not ask him. He is just in the pin-feather condition, and hopes to become a full-fledged preacher by-and-bye, and get good clothes and yellow-legged chickens easier than by working for them in the cotton-field. He has learned the clerical arguments, and has developed the clerical whine; and he evidently wishes he could wield the power of God, "and hurl damnation round the land on each he deems God's foe." And when he gets a license to preach, and has been ordained, he will wonder why so many people prefer to read the Sunday papers to coming to hear him preach.

I mention this circumstance just to illustrate the kind of ministers God calls to teach us the folly of preaching—to administer to us our mental pabulum week after week. Is it strange that two-thirds of the population of this country decline to partake of this chaff? The husks that the Prodigal Son shared with the swine were nutritious food compared with it. The wonder is that anybody at all goes; but, then, the fools are not all dead yet, and most of them go to church because they think it a duty; they submit to be bored with a sermon, as a sort of penance that is good for the soul—that is, it is a fire extinguisher that will rescue their souls from the burning pit where the Devil is looking for them. If it wasn't for the fear of the Devil, they would stay at home, like the other two-thirds of the people.

No doubt many of those who go to church are attracted by the music there, and they enjoy that, and sleep through the sermon; but these, unfortunately, have no other resource to satisfy the hunger of their souls for music. But who would wish to spend his time listening to the ordinary singing of a church choir, when he might stay at home and hear a better style of music performed by the hands of a loved and loving wife, or daughters, from the works of Mozart, Beethoven, and hundreds of others, the brightest geniuses, whose line of work is not restricted to the narrow demands of so-called sacred music? The real lover of music finds a more genuine gratification in the opera—that bugbear of the evangelical clergyman—or even in the cheaper concert halls, where a music better adapted to touch his heart is dispensed, than the church can venture to express in the hearing of "the Lord," for fear he may be moved to wrath and damn the whole concern.

But I have a plan, which I would suggest to Mr. Moody and the clerical profession generally, that would meet the case beyond doubt, and fill the churches with the now absent millions; though the colossal egotism of the profession has hitherto prevented them from seeing it. Let them look into the churches of the ministers who have been excommunicated for heresy and driven out of their sectarian pulpits for their devotion to truth as it has been made clear to them. These are men of brains and honesty; they have something to say, that people who cannot be

induced to listen to the pious platitudes of the average preacher will listen to gladly, and their churches or halls are crowded every Sunday by thinking men and women who gladly hear them. This should teach the preachers that if the people will not come to hear them there is something wrong about the preaching, and there should be a reformation in the pulpit.

The reformation should be begun in the theological schools, where teachers should be selected for what they know, and not for what they believe; teachers who are posted upon what science and scientific methods have discovered and demonstrated up to date, and who have honesty enough to teach it, regardless of the speculations of primitive barbarians on the authority of interested saints. Let these teachers keep out of the clerical profession all candidates who have not brains enough to understand their teaching, and talent and honesty enough to make it known. When this is done there will no longer be any complaint of empty pews in the churches, but the forty millions that Mr. Moody says never go inside a church will crowd the sanctuary till there shall be "standing room only."

The pulpit was once a power in the world; but that power it has lost, and the press has taken its place. If the pulpit is to regain it, or even to arrest the tide that is running stronger and stronger against its influence, it must change its methods and appeal to the rational thought and moral development of the age. Men of the present age will not be attracted to the churches by the old musty chaff of creeds, nor by superstitions that have been crystallized, in so-called holy books, and handed down from the childhood of mankind.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—Independent Pulpit.

## BOOK CHAT.

FREDERIC HENRY BALFOUR, in his *Waifs and Strays from the Far East* (Shanghai; 1876), tells in his Appendix, p. 122, of an educated Chinaman who, being taken to the cathedral at Shanghai, took his position in front of the pulpit, from the cushion of which hung a silken faul, inscribed with the sacred monogram, "I. H. S." His attention was aroused, and, calling an English friend to his side, he asked him how it was a Buddhist symbol was in a Christian church. His companion was perplexed, and requested an explanation. "There," said the Chinaman, pointing to the letter, "that is what I mean. That is the sacred symbol of Buddha, and has been so from immemorial time." The character is given in the book, and is strikingly like the Christian monogram.

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The series of volumes of curious beast stories about Buddha is making good progress under Professor E. B. Cowell's general editorship. It is expected that the work will be completed in seven volumes, or eight at most. The third volume of *The Jataka; or, the Teacher's Transmigrations Through the Beast World*, is by Mr. H. T. Francis and Mr. R. A. Neil. The stories, with their quaint moral tags, are translated from the Pali. They are published by Messrs. Clay & Sons.

\* \* \*

Mr. Charles Johnston, the translator of the *Katha Upanishad*, writing in the *Metaphysical Magazine*, parallels some of the Gospel parables about "The Kingdom of Heaven," from the ancient Sanskrit writings. Thus he compares the parable of the mustard seed to this from the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (iii. 14, 3): "This Self of mine, in the heart within, is smaller than a grain of rice, or a grain of barley, or a grain of mustard seed, or a grain of millet, or a grain of millet's kernel; this Self of mine, in the heart within, is greater than the earth, greater than the air, greater than heaven, greater than these worlds." We find a close parallel to the parable of the kingdom of heaven as a pearl of great price, to possess which the merchant sold all that he had. So, in the same work (viii. 6, 3), "the world of the eternal" is compared to this passage of the *Upanishads*: "And just as a treasure of gold, hid in a field, is passed by, over and over again, by those who know not its place and find it not; even so, verily, all these beings enter day by day into the world of the eternal, and know it not."

\* \* \*

Mr. Johnston says there is a group of parables completing the teachings of the Kingdom, which describe a king and his servants, or a prince with his court, or a master with his laborers; the same idea being cast in many forms. Here, again, we are on familiar ground. "Just as a sovereign orders those whom he has set in authority, saying 'Be ye

rulers over these villages and these villages,' thus, verily this Life disposes the lesser lives, in this direction and in that" (Prashna Upanishad, iii. 4). Here, as elsewhere in the Upanishads, the Life is the higher Self and its vesture. We may note, in passing, that this same Upanishad gives a missing part of the parable of the grain of mustard seed, in these words: "Just as, beloved, the birds of the air come together to a tree to rest, so indeed all this comes to rest in the higher Self." We have also another version of the parable of the King: "Just as a sovereign, setting out on a great journey, should mount a chariot or a ship, so also thou art reconciled to the Self by these teachings of wisdom; thou art full of power and wealth; thou hast heard the wisdom, and the teaching has been declared to thee; whither, then, wilt thou go, on reaching liberation?" (Bṛhadāranyaka Upanishad, iv. 2, 1).

William Bates, the famous Nonconformist, who was known as the silver-tongued divine, wrote, in 1691, *The Four Last Things*—Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. Bates knew all about these things, and there are several curious and funny remarks in the volume. But the funniest part is the advertisement, which suggests that the book "be given at funerals as a funeral legacy." It would, it is said, "affect their minds much better than wine, sweatmeats, gloves, or rings, or unprofitable talk, as is too usual at such solemnities." The title-page has a heavy black border, and copies were bound in black for the purpose named.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### SPIRITUALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me to express my high appreciation of the lofty sentiments contained in Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on "Truth," part of which appears in your current issue. What a noble incentive to the truth seeker to pursue patiently, carefully, in spite of all difficulties and obstacles, his investigations for the benefit of his fellow-men! It is simply glorious!

But, alas! it is a sad come down, after reading those glowing sentences, to turn the page and find "prejudice, egotism, contempt, disdain, the enemies of truth and progress," displayed so vehemently against a body of persons who, in the field of psychic science, are as earnest seekers after truth as those instanced by the Colonel as workers in other directions. You speak of Professor Oliver Lodge as being duped, and of Mr. T. Wild as being an impostor—by implication, and say that Spiritualists "hug their delusions and their mediums to the last." Now, as a matter of fact, it was a Spiritualist who first proclaimed the suspicions of Mr. Wild; and Spiritualists are always prompt to expose cases of fraud if they suspect them, not always waiting for proof.

With regard to Mr. Wild, I am one who thinks the charge of wilful imposture by no means clearly proven. If he had intended to cheat, I hardly think he would choose a method so certain of prompt discovery; nor do I think (from what I have seen of him) that he would be able to learn off, and repeat so correctly in order, so many names and addresses as he is said to have done.

To those who have studied psychic phenomena the case presents many points that cannot be settled off hand; and that is just the reason why the prejudiced and the unthinking (of whom some are Freethinkers only in name) find easy opportunities for cheap sneers and vulgar jibes. Spiritualism is founded on facts which have occurred over and over again, under circumstances precluding the possibility of fraud; it has won the support of men who wished to prove it a delusion or a fraud, but who have been compelled to admit (in the words of one of them) "the facts beat me." Here, then, we claim, is a field for honest investigation, "without prejudice—unbiassed by hatred or love, by desire or fear." The complex nature of the phenomena requires the utmost patience and the calmest reason on the part of the student; and I submit that it is distinctly unworthy of those who designate themselves Freethinkers, who applaud the sentiments contained in the lecture you print, and who decry bigotry as hateful and contemptible, to hold up to ridicule honest truth seekers simply because they have no sympathy with the subject of their research.

Is it too much to hope that the spirit of tolerance and intellectual hospitality extolled by Colonel Ingersoll may be more apparent in your paper in the future than it has been in the past? Not until we know all the secrets of nature can we afford to scoff at even puny efforts to unravel some of her mysteries.

A. W. ORR

(A Spiritualist Subscriber).

[We do not scoff at even puny efforts to unravel nature's mysteries, nor do we decry unbiassed investigation of psychic

or other phenomena. But we do object to charlatans who live on credulity. In our experience, many such have found encouragement from professed "Spiritualists." Of Mr. Wild we know nothing, but it was publicly asserted by his chairman that all the names and particulars which he pretended to give by seeing their spirits were found in recent obituaries. Mr. Orr may have a more satisfying explanation than that of Mr. Wild being an impostor; but, if the facts were as asserted, that is the view which commends itself to us.]

### ROMAN CATHOLIC STATISTICS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The Church of Rome in this country is astute in putting forward statements of the immense numbers which are joining her. It creates by this the impression that it is becoming the fashion, and that it is the "thing" to turn Papist. But these statements are, in fact, utterly false. I read a year or two ago, in a Catholic paper, a list of eminent persons who had recently joined "the Church." One of these I knew to have been dead for two years, and the majority of the remainder had joined it so long before that the list covered a space of thirty years. It would be well if someone with leisure would go into this matter and publish some counter statistics.

Not only do great numbers leave the Roman Church, but many rejoin it, and are counted twice; others are falsely reputed to be Catholics who have repudiated Christianity; and children, received secretly without the knowledge of their parents, are enumerated as "converts." I can answer for one example of this kind of thing. A man and his wife were "received" with seven children—nine persons. They returned to Protestantism, and the wife was afterwards twice re-received, and five of the children returned to the Catholic Church. The father died a Protestant; the mother died a Freethinker, and ordered the priest out of the house in her last moments. All the children but two have left the Catholic Church; of these two one is dead, but the other is fast becoming a Spiritualist. So that for nine persons received, on account of the re-receptions, seventeen would be added to the statistics—which would represent only one undoubted Roman Catholic. G. P.

## PROFANE JOKES.

ARIZONA AL—"Wal, what do think of that? Here's Jim goin' an' gettin' married!" Chloride Charley—"Wal, that's the way of the world!" ARIZONA AL—"Right enough; but look at this, 'No cards.' That's what comes of marryin' inter a pious family."

A clergyman in the West of England recently prayed "that the spark of grace might be watered with the dew of blessing from on high."

Reverend Escape from Palestine (introducing his lecture)—"With your permission, I shall now say a few words about Jerusalem." A Voice (devoutly)—"Thank heaven! We have at last hit upon an original subject, anyway!"

A clergyman, not long ago, was earnestly pressing upon the attention of a dying Lincolnshire boor certain doctrines which have presented difficulties to clearer heads under more favorable circumstances. "Wut wi' faath," was the faint response, given in the sick man's native Doric, "wut wi' faath, and wut wi' the earth a-turning round the sun, and wi' the railroads a-fuzzin' and a-whuzzin', I'm clean muddled, stoned, and bot." So saying, he turned to the wall and expired.

The following announcement was seen recently outside a certain suburban place of worship: "This evening the Rev. Mr. X. will preach his farewell sermon, and the choir will render a thanksgiving, specially composed for the occasion."

Little Girl—"Do you say your prayers every night?" Little Boy—"Yes." Little Girl—"And does your mammy say hers?" Little Boy—"Yes." Little Girl—"And your daddy?" Little Boy—"No; he doesn't need to. It's always daylight when he gets to bed."

The following terrible suggestion appeared on the book-edges of a suburban church, recently: "All kneelers are to be hung up at the end of the service."

The Young Parson—"I tell you I am discouraged, sir. I don't seem to stir up a bit of enthusiasm in my parish. They listen to me in a sort of perfunctory way, but I know I'm making little or no impression on them. What can I do?" The Old Parson—"There is just one thing left for you, after you have tried everything else." "And that is?" "Pitch into Jonah's whale!"

Eddie—"Popper, what does it mean by Adam's one fatal slip?" Eddie's Father (absent-mindedly)—"Parting with that rib, I suppose."

## 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, C. Watts, "The Sequel of the Cross."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, R. Forder, "Blasphemous Poetry."  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. P. Ward, "Secularism and Woman."  
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, F. J. Gould, "Class Feeling."  
ISLINGTON BRANCH: Special meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.  
KINGSLAND: 12, Meeting at Bradlaugh Club and Institute to make final arrangements for open-air season.  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school—Lesson by F. J. Gould on "Honor."  
7, Washington Sullivan, "Agur the Agnostic."  
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, J. A. Hobson, "England."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Jesus Christ and Modern Novels."  
EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Noah's Excursion."  
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, Stanley Jones.  
HARROW-ROAD (corner of Waltham-road): 3.30, Stanley Jones.  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford.  
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.  
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon's lane): 11.30, E. Pack, "The Resurrection."  
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, H. P. Ward, "An Appeal to Christians"; 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Fables."  
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, J. T. Blanchard, "Social Rights and Duties."  
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 8.15, H. P. Ward.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): G. W. Foote—11, "The Doom of the Gods"; 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "The Crescent and the Cross."  
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, An Entertainment.  
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—G. Faulkner, "The Human Nature of Jesus"; 6.30, W. Gilmour.  
LEEDS (Crampton's Hotel, Briggate): 7, Mr. Malcolm, "Space v. Materialism."  
PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7.30, Business meeting.  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "What is there Left of Christianity?" 3, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 7, "Atheism: Its Meaning, Morality, and Justification." Tea at 5.  
SOUTH SHIELDS (People's Palace, Ocean-road): Harry Snell—7, "Under which Lord?"

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 11.30, H. Snell, "The Foundations of the Bible."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 25 Sheffield.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—May 2, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Kilburn. 9, m., Clerkenwell. 23, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham-rye. 30, e., Edmonton.

H. PERCY WARD, 9 Leighton-crescent, Leighton-road, N.W.—April 25, m., Mile End Waste; a., Victoria Park; e., Camberwell.

## POSITIVISM.

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

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

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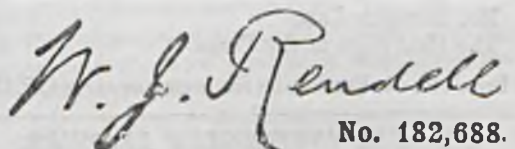
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