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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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TOLSTOI AND CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG, the inimitable biographer of Shelley, wrote a little known but very entertaining book of travels, in which he speaks incidentally of "that ridiculous person St. Augustine"—not, by the way, the monk who is said to have brought Christianity to England, but the famous "Father" who did so much to shape the doctrines of the Catholic Church. In a certain sense Hogg was right, and in a certain sense wrong. St. Augustine was a man of genius, though it ran in an unfortunate channel. He was not ridiculous himself, but he held many ridiculous opinions. In other words, he was a sincere and earnest Christian. What he read in the New Testament he believed. That was the only way he knew to win heaven, or at least to keep out of hell. Now, one of the teachings he found in the New Testament was the superiority of virginity to marriage; and he not only accepted it for himself, but preached it to others. When he was reminded that if all practised this doctrine the human race would soon come to an end, he exclaimed, "So much the better." And this also was logical in one who believed in the fall of man, in original sin, and in the damnation of the majority of mankind. "Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?" is a question which we defy any Christian to answer. Poor Ophelia *did not* answer it, and the subtlest divines *cannot*.

Count Tolstoi, the great Russian writer, who has left novel-writing for Christian propaganda, is another man of genius. He is by no means ridiculous himself, any more than St. Augustine was; but, like St. Augustine, he holds many ridiculous opinions. In other words, as we said of the great "Father," he is a sincere and earnest Christian. Reading the New Testament as St. Augustine did, and accepting the words of Christ as good for all men and at all times, he sees that every true Christian is bound to trample upon "the flesh," and that marriage itself is only a concession to man's prevalent infirmity. Tolstoi did not see this clearly until he began writing his *Kreutzer Sonata*. At first he was terrified by his own conclusion, and was disposed to reject it, but it was impossible not to hearken to what he calls "the voice of my reason and my conscience." Eight years ago he explained all this in an article which he wrote for the *Universal Review*. He pointed out that Christ did not marry himself, and that he discouraged marriage in others; that sexual intercourse of any kind is a sin in the light of Christ's teaching; and that such a thing as Christian marriage is an impossible absurdity. Precise references were given to Gospel texts, but neither this nor the eminence of the essayist was enough to elicit a reply. Tolstoi was allowed to go unanswered. The apologists of orthodox Christianity, who are merely the spiritual jackals of the lions of privilege and vested interests, probably reflected that the question was dangerous to ventilate, that the less they said about it the better, and that if nothing at all was said Tolstoi's article would soon be forgotten. But the great Russian does not intend to be snuffed out in this way. He keeps reminding Christians of the indubitable teaching of the New Testament. There is a certain mercilessness in his Russian stolidity. He is like the death's-head at a feast. Christians marry and are given in marriage, just like the children of this world; but Tolstoi gets in his sermon in the pauses of the festivity, and all the rest of the time he glooms his gospel of the

grave, which he mistakes for the gospel of spiritual emancipation.

"Specially contributed" to the *New Age* for December 16 is a long article by Tolstoi "On Marriage," in "explanation of the *Kreutzer Sonata*." Some parts of this article are sound enough—such as the personal and social wholesomeness of working for one's living, and the degradation of furtive and illicit attachments. All this, however, has been said as well, if not better, by the great Norwegian novelist and Freethinker, Bjornson, in his fine pamphlet on *Monogamy and Polygamy*. Indeed, the very word *dissoluteness* shows an instinctive appreciation in the human mind that such conduct leads to death. *Dissipation* is another admirably expressive word, implying that such conduct scatters and wastes instead of concentrating and utilizing the powers of life.

Let us fix our attention on Tolstoi's *special* teaching in the name of Christ. Take this passage first:—

"Men and women should be educated, both by their parents and by public opinion, so as to look, both before and after marriage, upon falling in love and the sexual affection connected with it, not as a poetical, elevated condition, in which light they are at present regarded, but as an animal condition degrading to mankind."

Tolstoi has had his innings. He has arrived at an age when a man sometimes wonders at the passions of youth. "All for Love; or, the World Well Lost" is not likely to be an old man's fanaticism. When the fire of manhood has died out into ashes, and the father of a numerous grown-up family echoes the cry of the impotent voluptuary, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," the world at large may well smile in spite of all his seriousness. The personal equation counts for so much in such matters. Not, indeed, that this is the whole of the question. For as there is a luxury of woe, so there is a joy of asceticism, which is one of the most abiding elements of the religions of the East. To gratify the passions to the fullest possible extent is one false way of life; to trample upon them as accursed things is another; and the profligate and the ascetic have each their appropriate pleasure, and each their appropriate penalty. Neither is really sane. Both have missed the golden mean of justified wisdom and durable happiness.

"Animal condition" forsooth! Why, man is an animal; and the frank recognition of this fact is the beginning of moral and social philosophy. Risen animal, or fallen angel—these are the only two possible theories of human nature; and as we incline to the one or the other we are healthy or morbid—in sane touch with mother nature or victims of fantastic delusion.

Man is an animal, yet the paragon of animals, and his highly-developed brain, his social experience, and his knowledge of history give him a psychical life, of which, however, the bodily organs, derived from his brute ancestry, always remain the inevitable basis. To denounce these organs is simply to curse one's pedigree, to indict evolution instead of accepting it and making the best of it. And denounce them as we may, we cannot get away from them. They are ourselves, and to extinguish the passions is to annihilate the man.

But as the basic stomach, which is nature's organic starting-point, while never disappearing in man, is nevertheless dominated by the higher organs which mould the arch of the brow and give splendor to the eyes; so the other fundamental instinct of reproduction is dominated by the affections which have been developed in the long

process of domestic and social discipline, and by the tastes developed in the long process of æsthetic culture; so that, although a eunuch does not need a mistress, the reasons which decide a man's preference for this or that woman, and maintain the constancy of his love, cannot be given in terms of biology or physiology. They are psychical, and can only be given in terms of the higher life, though that is but an evolution from the lower.

Even if there be a God, he has played us a very strange trick in making us male and female, if he did not mean us to be such, openly and honestly, without peril of degradation. And sex is more than physical; it is psychical too; it runs through our whole natures; and in thousands of subtle and incalculable ways it makes that delightful variety—"Not like to like, but like in difference." Romeo and Juliet would not have fallen in love with each other if they had not been first of all animals, with diversely sexual natures; but there is something more than the excitement of sex-cells, of which we hear so much in certain quarters, in the passion which ransacks nature for similes, and prefers death to any life without union with the beloved.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

FIN DE CYCLE.

Do I seem to say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"? Far from it; on the contrary, I say, "Let us take hands and help, for this day we are alive together."—*W. K. Clifford.*

As the New Year's sun dispels
The darkness of the night,
So let the Old Year's sorrow
At the dawning take its flight.—*H. S.*

EVER-changing nature knows neither beginning nor end. Time exists only for us as we mark off the seasons in our orbit round the sun. To us, each New Year is a new milestone, telling of the ever-diminishing journey from birth to death. As lengthening of the daylight is a fitting occasion for rejoicing, we cannot wonder if a New Year induces an attitude of expectancy exemplified in the religionists, who hold a watch-night service, believing or hoping that the day of the Lord is near at hand. In a somewhat similar frame of mind, our Theosophic friends tell us that we are reaching, not only the *fin de siècle* (the end of the century), but the *fin de cycle* (the end of a Great Year of Years), and that with a new cycle we shall witness untold developments of human powers. Madame Blavatsky fixed 1897-8 as the period for "squaring accounts between the races"; but Mrs. Besant, who has the latest precipitations from the Mahatmas, fixes the third day of December, 1899, when seven planets will be grouped in Sagittarius—the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Herschel—as the great day when, above all, "the hearts of Theosophists should be calm, firm, and serene."

A very pathetic spectacle is that of the Micawber-like religionist, who, with insufficient energy to act in the living present, is always "waiting for something to turn up." The Jew, who isolates himself amid persecution and obloquy, still looks for the fulfilment of the prophecies in the advent of the Messiah. The Christians, who trust the Lord, appeal to these same prophecies, so palpably unfulfilled by their Savior at his first coming, as proof that he will come again. The Moslems look for the Mahdi, and the Hindus for a new avatar at the ever-approaching end of the Kalpa.

Expectation of the wonderful is always delusive; and detrimental, too, when it stands in the way of present action. Let us rest assured that there is nothing to be that is not in germ now. If we wish to be better off to-morrow, we must work to-day. There is nothing like filling the present moment full. Watching or waiting the coming of the Lord is useless. We must make our heaven here and now. It is no good trusting to Providence. You cannot trust a more dangerous thing. The believer waits for God, or nature, or fate, to do something for him. The Secularist anticipates opportunity, and acts for himself.

Man in his arrogance fancies himself eternal, yet in his ignorance he speaks of inevitable death as being "launched into eternity." How can there be any eternity of which the living present is not a component part? So religionists tell us of the dread day of judgment, as though it was not the days of no judgment that we have ever to dread.

Emerson well says: "We know little till we know that every day is doomsday." With each new dawn there is a renewal of life, as of a new-born babe at its mother's breast. Every new year comes to us as a new child. What lies in store for it none can know; but its possibilities are great. At least we can determine to do our best to aid its growth, relieve its ills, and fill its little life with gladness.

Kind hearts can make December blithe as May,
And in each morrow find a New Year's Day.

We cannot dis sever ourselves from the common life around us. Rather we live to the fullest when we vibrate readily to its joy or its anguish.

With each New Year we naturally think of old friends who have departed; and of the young who will take our place when we too depart. They are the little heralds of a brighter time. Let children be taught to think freely and speak boldly. Let them learn the facts of science, instead of the fictions of theology; then will gradually an enlightened public opinion be created which will be greater than thrones or established Churches, which will effectively throw off diseases in the body politic as healthy blood casts off disease from the physical system, and which will give assurance of a brighter and better time as the lot of humanity upon earth.

J. M. WHEELER.

SECULAR PROGRESS.

It is to me a source of unqualified pleasure to know that, during the year which has just departed, Secularism has made a marked progress in Great Britain. Not only has there been a considerable increase in the membership of the National Secular Society, but our principles have been more than ever recognised and acted upon in every sphere of life. Our success in the field of propagandism has been more extensive and decisive during 1897 than it has been for many years. Mr. Foote and myself have held many important debates with the best men who could be found to come forward upon the Christian side. Through these controversies, hundreds of professed Christians have heard for the first time an exposition of Secular principles; and, what is more important, many persons, who were either indifferent or known to be on the "other side," have joined the N.S.S. in consequence of listening to the discussions. The free lectures given by our President, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Heaford, Mr. Moss, myself, and others, have been followed by most satisfactory results. The subjects of our lectures have not been confined to attacks upon theology, but the various social problems of the day have received careful consideration from all the speakers.

Our first duty, as Secular exponents, is to consider the best course to be adopted to secure the improvement of the present condition of society. This, in my opinion, can only be effectually done by destroying the supremacy of theology, and the false notions that have been formed as to the authority and value of the Bible. Fortunately, the last twelve months have been exceedingly eventful in the acquirement of mental freedom. The Old Testament, a book of antique laws and sensational tales, has most assuredly lost its former influence among those who govern the arrangements of society. The New Testament, alike dreamy and unpractical, has also shared the fate of its parent. With us Freethinkers, who shrink not to speak the whole truth, the full realization and the legitimate action of true principles rest. We shall, no doubt, still be misrepresented and unjustly treated. Those even who have so far advanced as to adopt many of the views that we long ago taught, and which were considered by them to be blasphemous, may continue to censure our "extreme" opinions. But we shall persevere in combatting whatever impedes the progress of modern thought. It is alleged that the service of Secularism to the world has been impaired in consequence of its being too negative in its advocacy. But why this professed alarm at the negative policy of Secularism? Is negation to error a crime? Is the destruction of wrong useless to society? Is it no service to mankind, while shams are regarded as realities and falsehoods worshipped as truth, to pursue a negative course of action? Should we be wise in being positive to foolish conjectures about another world and injurious conduct in this? On the contrary, it is necessary to prepare public opinion for the reception of

advanced views by striving to eradicate from the human mind errors which were taught by the Church when ignorance was the rule, and knowledge the exception. Our work, however, is not limited to the endeavor to destroy error; we are constantly making efforts to permeate society with constructive principles, whereby a new order of things shall obtain. Still, the province of Secularism is not only to enunciate positive principles, but also to break up old systems which have lost their vitality, and to refute theologies which have hitherto usurped judgment and reason.

Since writing the above I have read the article by "Gracchus" in *Reynolds's Newspaper* dated December 19, upon "Modern Secularists." Here we have another instance of how recklessly Secularists are misrepresented by critics who lack a knowledge of what our principles and objects really are. It is to be regretted that writers who find fault with Secularists, and volunteer to give them advice, will not make themselves better acquainted with the facts of the subjects upon which they write. Freethinkers, perhaps more than any other members of the community, have had to suffer through being misrepresented, simply because those who criticise their principles have not carefully investigated that which they seek to depreciate. One can understand the ordinary orthodox preacher, whose mind is swayed by theological prejudice, committing this grave fault; but I certainly did not expect that so able, and, as a rule, so careful, a writer as "Gracchus" would have fallen into such an error. He admits that "there has been a great increase in the number of Freethinkers" within the last few years, but "the Secularist organization has lost ground." The latter statement is a mistake. I have been identified with the National Secular Society from its inception. For many years I was its secretary, and an active colleague of Mr. Bradlaugh. I knew the strength of the Society then, and I know it now; and without any hesitation I allege that the *Secular* element in the association is stronger to-day than it ever was. True, in Mr. Bradlaugh's time it had a prominent political feature, which it has not now. It has been deemed wise of late years to confine its work to the original purpose of the organization, which was the exposition of positive principles for the regulation and the ennobling of character and conduct in daily life, apart altogether from the teachings of what is termed supernatural religion. In carrying out this work it was found that theology stood in the way of our progress, and therefore we deemed it necessary to adopt a destructive policy towards theological error. And although many of those errors have been swept away, we have many orthodox impediments still to cope with, to destroy which negative work is required. This "Gracchus" really admits in the program which he suggests to the Secularists to adopt in the future.

But it is curious that "Gracchus" did not remember that the very program which he thinks Secularists should adopt is actually the one that the N. S. S. has officially accepted, and acted upon for several years. Among our "Principles and Objects," published annually in the Society's Almanack, are the following: "The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales. The Abolition of all Religious Tests and Disabilities in schools, colleges, municipalities, parliament, the executive, and the judicature. The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State. The opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike. The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for purposes of culture and recreation. A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce. The equalization of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions. The protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor. The abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, as fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood. The promotion of the right and duty of labor to organize itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations." Surely this social work is practical enough, and it indicates that Secularists do not devote *all* their time to exposing the folly and injurious results of the faiths of theology.

"Gracchus" says that Secularists should render "support to reformers in other departments of social life." That is precisely what we do. Individually we take our part in the political questions of the day, and support those who advocate views that accord with our own. But, inasmuch as our Society is not a political organization, and as among us there are Tories, Liberals, and Radicals, each member is left to take what course he deems best politically to secure the well-being of the community. Some Secularists are Socialists, others are Individualists; and our members, without committing the N. S. S. to their particular views, render support to any movement so far as thereby the "Objects" of our Association, as above stated, are advanced. In the recent School Board election Mr. Foote and myself, with pen and tongue, gave practical support to candidates who favored purely secular education. Messrs. Cohen, Heaford, and Moss did the same. And when the time arrives for earnest fighting in the interests of real political and social reform Secularists will not be idle. In the meantime we labor patiently but persistently to stimulate serious thought and judicious action among the masses, and at the same time to remove the greatest hindrances—which we think are of a theological character—to the attainment of personal freedom and national advancement.

The proofs of Secular progress are seen in the power which the Church has lost over the people; in the fact that doctrines and creeds, once held indispensable, are now discarded; in the unrest of the toiling millions, who are yearning for justice; in the increased attention paid to the mundane condition of the community; in the decline in the belief in Bible infallibility; in the cessation of public prosecutions of avowed Freethinkers for heresy; in the refusal of leading clergymen and ministers to meet Secular representatives in debate; in the changed meaning given by Christian writers as to the nature of Christianity; and in the present desire to practically realize what is so often theoretically proclaimed, that the general welfare and happiness of the people here on earth should be the supreme aim of all who would make life worth living.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

XVII.—THE ALLEGED TRIAL OF CHRIST.

ACCORDING to all four Gospels, Jesus, after his arrest, was conducted to the house of the high priest where the Sanhedrim were assembled, and there underwent a short examination before that council. The chief priests, we are told, sought "false witnesses" in order to condemn him, and finally found two who deposed that Christ had said: "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days" (Matthew xxvi. 61). When questioned as to this charge, Jesus "held his peace." Such an accusation was, of course, ridiculous; but Christ had only himself to thank for it; for, according to John ii. 19, he had said, when standing near the Sanctuary: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The evangelist says that Christ "spoke of the temple of his body"; but Jesus did not tell the Jews so. They replied: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?" Though Christ saw they understood his words literally, he did not, by so much as a word, explain his meaning. The false witnesses, then, did not testify to much that was false.

In the first two Gospels Jesus is next asked whether he was "the Christ, the Son of God." Here the two evangelists assume that the Jewish Messiah was to be "the Son of God," and they represent the high priest as asking a question agreeing with their assumption. But the Messiah looked for by the Jews was to be a purely human deliverer (note, for example, the support given to the pretender, Bar Cochba); consequently, the high priest could not have asked the question attributed to him. Christ's reply to this question is given in the First Gospel as "Thou hast said"; in the Second Gospel as "I am." In the Third Gospel, however, the high priest did not ask this question; he said, "If thou art the Christ, tell us"; to which Jesus replied, "If I tell you, ye will not believe" (xxii. 67). The high priest then asked, "Art thou the Son of God?" and Jesus replied, "Ye say that I am"—a statement

which was untrue. Christ's reply is explained as meaning "Ye say it, because I am"—which was equally untrue; for the whole of the Gospel narratives prove that Christ was not the "Son of God." Lastly, Jesus is represented as saying to his judges: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man.....coming in the clouds of heaven"—a prediction which was never fulfilled, and which the high priest characterized as "blasphemy." This concludes the examination before the Sanhedrim, according to the three Synoptical accounts.

If we turn now to the Fourth Gospel, we find that the questions put to Christ were of a totally different character. In this version the high priest "asked Jesus of his disciples and of his teaching," to which questions Christ somewhat impertinently replied: "I ever taught in synagogues and in the temple.....and in secret spake I nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them that have heard me" (xviii. 19-21). Then, it is said, one of the officers present "struck Jesus with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so." This account, it will be seen, flatly contradicts the accounts given by the three Synoptists. Also, when giving the reply here recorded—"in secret spake I nothing"—Christ appears to have forgotten that he never explained any of his allegorical teaching to the public, but expounded the whole of it "in secret" to his disciples only.

The assembling of the Sanhedrim on the first day (or rather night) of the passover for the purpose of trying a prisoner was, as far as we can learn, contrary to Jewish law. According to the Mishna, no court of justice was permitted to sit at night, or on a holy day or a feast day. Capital trials were held only in the daytime, and never on the day preceding a sabbath or a feast day. Also, if the accused was found guilty, sentence was deferred until the following day. Hence, in the Gospel accounts, the examination was illegal, and the Sanhedrim wholly disregarded its own laws and precedents. This matter is disputed, as might be expected, by upholders of the Gospel narratives, who assert (of course, without evidence) that the Jews in the time of Christ did not regard the trial of criminals as a desecration of holy days. To settle this point, we have but to turn to the first alleged command respecting the keeping of the passover (Exodus xii. 16). This reads as follows:—

"And in the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day an holy convocation; *no manner of work* shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, *that only* may be done of you."

According to the Gospel story, the chief priests and elders—who are several times rebuked for their too scrupulous observance of the Mosaic ritual—after having solemnly partaken of the paschal meal in the evening, left their homes and met together to do some "manner of work"—viz., to seek for false witnesses, and to examine and condemn an innocent man, and this on one of the two days which was to be "an holy convocation." And of this council of pious, venerable, and respected men it is said: "Then did they spit in his face and buffet him, and some smote him with the palms of their hands," &c. (Matthew xxvi. 67). We are asked to believe that this was the way the priests and elders kept a solemn and holy convocation. The whole story is, on the face of it, fictitious, and was, beyond a doubt, concocted by an unscrupulous Gentile Christian, who knew nothing whatever of Jewish law and custom.

Were the Gospel narratives true, the Sanhedrim could have easily condemned Jesus without the aid of "false witnesses." The priests and scribes, who are stated to have been constantly on the watch "that they might accuse" Jesus, could have charged that miracle-worker with destroying two thousand pigs (Mark v. 13), the property of certain Gentiles residing in Galilee, and with leaving that part of the country without recompensing the owners for the loss. Such an act was nothing less than robbery, and robbery was punished with death. But in the fictitious narrative in the Gospels not one of the seventy-one members of the Sanhedrim had ever heard of the destruction of the Gadarene swine, or of the large sum of money of which Christ had robbed the owners.

Again, in John ii. 14-16 it is recorded of Jesus:—

"And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out

of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables; and to them that sold the doves he said: Take these things hence."

Were this story true, it would have been known to the whole council, and the money-changers could have charged Christ with the loss of their scattered coins. The chief priests could also have arraigned Jesus on their own account; for there was no profanation of the Sanctuary at all. The traffic mentioned—the selling sheep, oxen, and doves to those who required them for sacrifice, and the giving change for foreign money—was not carried on within the sacred precincts of the temple, but in the Court of the Gentiles, and it was approved by the priests, and was sanctioned by ancient usage. Had Jesus, or any other self-styled prophet, attempted to forcibly suppress this lawful traffic, he would not only have rendered himself a laughing-stock, but he would have brought down on his devoted head summary chastisement, without going through the form of a trial. The story of a crowd of respectable dealers leaving their legitimate occupations, and retreating panic-stricken before Christ's "scourge of cords," is almost too ludicrous even for fiction. Small wonder, then, that none of the members of the Sanhedrim had ever heard of it.

In the Synoptical Gospels it is stated that "when morning was come" the chief priests and elders led Jesus to the Prætorium, and "delivered him up to Pilate" for trial, and that they stood before Pilate's judgment-seat and "accused him of many things." But in the Fourth Gospel it is said that the priests and elders remained outside, and "entered not into the Prætorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover" (xviii. 28). Pilate, therefore, had to keep going backward and forward between the prisoner and his accusers—an indignity to which no chief magistrate (more especially Pilate, who was not at all favorably disposed towards the Jews) would for a moment have submitted. If those who made the charges were unable to enter the court, the trial would have to be postponed until they could attend.

The same voracious writer says that the chief priests, in answer to Pilate's question as to the charge they brought against Christ, replied: "If this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him unto thee" (xviii. 30). This was simple insolence, which it is not likely the procurator would have calmly put up with, as he is represented as doing in the Gospel story.

According to the first two Gospels, Pilate commenced by asking Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" And Christ replied, "Thou sayest"; which is said to mean "I am." Now Pilate, at that time, had been Governor for several years, and knew perfectly well that the Jews belonging to his province had no king. He could not, therefore, have asked such a ridiculous question. Christ's statement in answer was, of course, untrue; he had never, even for a single day, been "king of the Jews." Even if it be admitted that his "kingdom was not of this world," it was not the Jews who belonged to his kingdom.

In the Third Gospel Pilate, upon hearing Christ reply that he *was* the king of the Jews, said to his accusers: "I find no fault in this man" (xxiii. 4). Any other magistrate would have regarded Jesus either as a seditious person or as a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. In the Fourth Gospel, to the same question—"Art thou the king of the Jews?"—Jesus answered Pilate: "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?" This reply was simply veiled insolence, which Pilate would not be likely to stand from any prisoner—more especially a Jew.

In the Synoptical Gospels Jesus "answered nothing." Pilate said to him: "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he gave him no answer, *not even to one word*" (Matthew xxvii. 11-14). From this silence most judges would have inferred guilt—it is, in the majority of cases, the prisoner who cannot answer the charge who does not attempt to do so—but Pilate, looking at everything upside-down, "knew that for envy they had delivered him up."

According to Luke, Christ's accusers said: "We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king.....He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea," etc. (xxiii. 2, 5). These were matters which no Roman governor could allow to pass, more especially since Jesus did not deny the charges. But Pilate, with-

out asking for evidence, either for or against, said: "I find no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him.....I will therefore chastise him and release him" (xxiii. 14, 16). Here the chief magistrate completely ignores the most serious charges, and, on his own responsibility, proposes to act in direct contravention to the Roman law—scourging being administered only to those found guilty of some crime.

Luke says again that Pilate, when he heard that Jesus was from Galilee, sent him to Herod Antipas, who happened to be then in Jerusalem, and that "Herod with his soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him," and then sent him back to Pilate (xxiii. 7-11). Of this incident the other three evangelists appear never to have heard, and beyond that their accounts leave no place for it.

Next, it is stated in all four Gospels that it was customary for the governor to release a prisoner at the feast of the passover (John xviii. 39, etc.). This "custom" we may set down as an invention, for the Jews know nothing of it, and we find no mention of it anywhere outside the Gospels.

According to the Fourth Gospel, Pilate, after declaring Christ to be innocent, caused him to be scourged, and looked on while his soldiers arrayed him in a purple robe, placed a crown of thorns on his head, and smote him—Jesus being then uncondemned (xix. 1-4). Pilate then led Christ in this dress outside, and said to the Jews: "I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him." It is needless to say that no Roman governor would have acted in this illegal way, and certainly not Pilate, who never attempted to conciliate the Jews in anything.

Lastly, according to Matthew (xxvii. 24), Pilate, finding himself powerless to release Jesus, "took water, and washed his hands.....saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man"—a ceremony which was Jewish, not Roman—and then delivered the "righteous man" to be crucified. It may be safely said that no Roman procurator would have handed over a man whom he had just declared to be innocent, to be mocked, insulted, and put to death, and this at the dictation of a few priests and scribes whom he hated and despised—as did Pilate.

Looking at all the absurdities, improbabilities, and contradictions in the Gospel accounts of the alleged trial of Jesus, there can be, to the mind of any rational person, but one conclusion possible—viz., that the whole story, from beginning to end, is a Christian fabrication, and that the story is as silly as it is mendacious.

ABRACADABRA.

THE BIBLE AND WOMAN.

BOTH the books of the Old Testament, and also of the New, express the views in regard to woman which prevailed when those books were written. The conception in regard to woman was that she was naturally man's inferior, that her position should be one of subordination, that she should have no will of her own, except as it was in accord with that of her father, husband, or master.

The enlightened portions of the world have gradually been outgrowing these ideas. This progress has constantly been opposed by the influence of Bible teachings on the subject. The influence of the Bible against the elevation of woman, like its influence in favor of slavery, has been great because of the infallibility and the Divine authority with which the teachings of the Bible have been invested. If the Bible had, like other books, been judged by its actual merits, in the light of reason and common sense, its teachings about woman would have had no authoritative weight; but when millions have for centuries been brought up to believe that the Bible is an inspired and infallible revelation from God, its influence has been mischievous in a thousand ways.

A collection of books which teach, as from God, that man was made first for the glory of God, and woman for man simply; that woman was first to sin, and therefore should be in submission to man; that motherhood implies moral impurity and requires a sin offering (twice as much in the case of a female as of a male child), must have continued to keep woman in a degraded condition just in

proportion as such ideas have been believed to be true and inspired by God.

The advancement of woman throughout Christendom has been going on only where these doctrines have been outgrown or modified through the influence of science, of scepticism, and of liberal thought generally. That the Bible does teach that woman's position should be one of subordination and submission to man, and that through her first came sin into the world, is indisputable; and I do not see how such teachings, believed to be direct from God, can be accepted without retarding woman's progress. Mr. Lecky and others have shown historically that these oriental conceptions have distinctly degraded woman wherever they have prevailed.

What we should naturally expect to have resulted from these conceptions is shown by experience actually to have been the result of such teachings, enforced by the authority of Moses and of St. Paul.

The idea of woman's equality with man in all natural rights and opportunities finds no support in the Bible. The doctrine that there is neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, in Christ Jesus, had no practical application to social conditions. It left the slave in chains, and the woman in fetters. Where the old theological dogmas respecting woman are the least impaired, woman's condition is the least hopeful. Where the authority of reason is in the ascendant, or where it is superseding the authority of book revelations, of creeds and of churches, woman's position is the most advanced, her rights are the most completely recognised, her opportunities for progress the most fully allowed, and her character the most fully developed.

SARA A. UNDERWOOD.

—*Boston Investigator.*

A YULE CAROL.

The golden god begins his reign,
Triumphant over death and pain
Set festal fires ablaze again,
'Tis merry, merry Yule!

No puny babe, in manger-bed;
But mighty God, of fire-storm bred,
Exulting in his lustihead.
Rejoice! 'tis merry Yule!

Behind him speeds his handmaid, Spring;
Before him flees the Winter-king;
Let shout and song exultant ring!
'Tis merry, merry Yule!

Set glistening berries, red and white,
A-twinkle in the Yule-log's light,
Like pearls and rubies sparkling bright,
To welcome merry Yule!

The golden god is risen again!
His love shall warm the silver rain,
And blessings pour on hill and plain.
Rejoice! 'tis merry Yule!

His might shall melt the winter snow,
Sweet springtide blossoms soon shall show,
And brimming brooklets brawling flow!
'Tis merry, merry Yule!

The daisy-stars and stars of gold
Shall gleam and glitter on the wold,
In constellations manifold.
Sing ho! for merry Yule!

The golden god begins his reign!
Rejoice with glad, triumphant strain!
Let mirth and wassail ring again!
'Tis merry, merry Yule!

The snow will thaw, but he shall throw
A daintier storm of pinky snow,
When apple-blossoms blithely blow
Beyond this merry Yule!

The radiant summer shall arise
And stain her blooms with rainbow dyes,
And fleck with fleece her sapphire skies,
For lo! 'tis merry Yule!

The lilies from the fragrant mould
Shall rise like ghosts, all white and gold;
And roses red and white unfold!
Yo ho! for merry Yule!

The golden god begins his reign!
The glebe shall wave with golden grain
And harvest-moon light loaded wain.
Rejoice! rejoice! 'tis Yule!

The world shall don a richer gown—
All glorious scarlet, gold, and brown—
And crimson fruits the year shall crown
Beyond this merry Yule!

The golden god begins his reign!
Sing, young and old, with might and main,
And dance for joy, that once again
'Tis merry, merry Yule!

EX-RITUALIST.

ACID DROPS.

WHAT a terrible tragedy was that East-end fire in Dixie-street. A whole family was wiped out of existence, with the exception of the father, who was in the hospital with consumption, and who died himself a few hours afterwards. The poor victims were probably suffocated before they were burnt, which is at least a grain of consolation. When the bodies were discovered the eight-months baby was scarcely touched by the flames, for the mother shielded it instinctively with her arms. She was terribly burnt herself, but she protected her babe. Ah, what a wonder is maternal love! All the dogmas of religion are dwarfed by its sublimity. The student of evolution sees in that maternal love the very secret of civilization. It is the primitive germ from which all morality has been developed. Love knows nothing of conscience, it is true; but conscience is born of love. So said Shakespeare, who seems to have understood everything.

And now let us look at this East-end tragedy from another point of view. The father of the family was in the Workhouse Infirmary, dying of consumption, and the poor mother had struggled to maintain her children by making match-boxes. She had fought against destitution for months, and the reward of courage her came at last in that dreadful holocaust. What a demonstration of the benevolence of God!

There is another aspect of this tragedy to be confronted. Here is a consumptive father with a wife and nine children! What a side-light this throws on the great population question! How can anything but poverty, disease, and misery be bred in such conditions? And what a load of guilt lies upon the Christian Churches that tell these unhappy people to increase and multiply, and teach them that to refrain is to fly in the face of God!

Sarah Jarvis, the mother of this annihilated family, was thirty-nine years old. The eldest of her nine children was only sixteen, the youngest was eight months. A fresh baby came every two years, until finally little Elizabeth was born when little Caroline was only sixteen months old. In other words, the poorer and more miserable they got, and the more diseased the father became, the faster they multiplied.

There is much instruction in this tragedy, if one could only hammer it all out. As it is, we have said enough to set our readers thinking. And after all it is only thinking that avails. Man's salvation depends at last on the growth of the grey matter in his brain. A wretched, materialistic doctrine, the pious will call it; but if it be true, what is the use of calling names?

Christmas is now over. The worshippers of Jesus Christ have done celebrating his fabulous birth by consuming tangible food and drink. The turkeys and geese are all eaten, and the bones are in the dustbin; and pills and other medicine are curing the effects of plum-pudding, port wine, and Scotch whisky. Everything ends—even the carousing of Christians. And now the festivities are concluded, we invite our orthodox friends to consider soberly the meaning of all this jollification. Are thick eating and long drinking the way to celebrate the incarnation of a god? How are this carnality and this spirituality to be reconciled? Our orthodox friends, if they will only take the trouble to learn and reflect, will see that Christmas is a relic of old nature-worship. The twenty-fifth of December is the birthday of the Sun, the lord and giver of every good thing on this planet; and eating and drinking, with song and dance, was a practical way of thanksgiving for his benefactions. And now Christmas is over the Christians give New Year's presents, just as the Romans and other pagans did in the brave days of old. Only names and shibboleths change. When you come to rites and customs, there is nothing new under the sun, and every modern religion is a plagiarism on the old.

"Christmas in the Churches" was the heading of a three-column report in Monday's *Daily News*. The sub-line was "Interesting Services." And interesting they may have been from a musical or spectacular point of view; but the sermons appear to have been dull to the point of stupidity. Dean Gregory was the preacher at St. Paul's Cathedral. In the course of his sermon he remarked that "no child was too young to receive at baptism that blessing which it could not have by nature." In other words, any little helpless lump of human dough can be sprinkled with holy water by a man of God, and made a child of Grace, instead of a child of the Devil, for the modest sum of a few shillings. These are the glad tidings of great joy from the biggest Christian joss-house in London.

At Westminster Abbey the Dean preached the Christmas sermon. Speaking from a pulpit, where the greatest fool cannot be set right nor the greatest liar contradicted, he declared that "the people of Greece and Rome, to whom we owed so much, had no rebuke for the oppressor, no hope or comfort for the bereaved." Dean Bradley must be a very ignorant man if he does not know that this is utter nonsense. If he does know it, there is another epithet more suitable to his condition. We leave every reader to pick it out from the dictionary himself.

At St. Alban's, Holborn, the preacher was "Father" Stanton. He spoke of the prevalence of war and wickedness in the world—nearly two thousand years after the time when God Almighty came to this world himself as a missionary. This is very, very sad; in fact, it is a greater mystery than anything in the Bible. Still, we must not despair. "In the fulness of time," Father Stanton said, "Christ's power will be still more manifested among men, and peace and goodwill will exist between the nations of the earth." What a blessed save-all is that same "fulness of time"! When war dies out in the natural course of civilization, as some of us at least hope it will, the "fulness of time" will have arrived, and Christ will have brought about the reign of peace. That is to say, he never really does anything for us until we have done it for ourselves. When we don't want him he comes to our assistance, and his is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Dr. Guinness Rogers, preaching at Clapham, had a slap at the philosophers—and his dislike of them is only natural. Fortunately, the herald angels did not appear to philosophers, but to shepherds. That is why thousands of shepherds now get a good living by preaching the old, old story. Philosophers would have strangled it at its birth by showing its absurdity.

Mr. Price Hughes held forth at St. James's Hall, and seems to have said nothing in particular. But the service was a great success, for the platform was gaily decorated, and there was a handbell performance with a pianoforte accompaniment played by one of the "sisters"—which the audience or congregation (or whatever they call it) applauded. It was as good as a fourth-rate music-hall.

Many other Christmas sermons we must pass by without comment. But a word should be given to that of the Bishop of Rochester at St. Savior's, Southwark. His lordship spoke of the sweet babe of Bethlehem in his mother's arms, and said it was a picture that suggested three lessons—the preciousness of childhood, the honor due to women, and the dignity of manhood. But is not the last lesson somewhat ironical? It suggests the thought of poor Joseph in the pictures of the holy family. Mary and the baby are in front, and old Joe is very much behind, his connection with both of them being of the remotest character. There is not much "dignity of manhood" about Joseph. He knows he is playing gooseberry, and often looks as though it would be a great relief to adjourn to the nearest public-house.

"Dagonet" (Mr. G. R. Sims) preaches his Christmas sermon in the *Referee*. "One's heart sinks down within one," he says, "to think how little real effect the birth of the Redeemer has upon the world of to-day." He asks if the world is not "almost ripe for a new Redemption." Of course it is. It has been ripe any time during the last nineteen hundred years. Christianity offers a bogus Redemption—a redemption from the miseries of this world in another. What we want is redemption in this world, and that can only be achieved by Science and Humanity.

We seem to have been the innocent occasion of another blasphemy prosecution in Germany. At least, we read that one has been brought against the editor of the *Freidenker* of Wiesbaden for having inserted the translation of an article in which the Amen found at the end of Christian prayers is identified with the Egyptian hidden god Amen. This was done by a writer in the *Freethinker*. Wilhelm wants

to dragonnade his people into being good Christians, that they may make good hired assassins.

Two crimes are severely punished in Germany—saying anything disrespectful of religion, or anything disrespectful of the Emperor. Of course the second crime is the worse, for with rampagious sovereigns it is always "Me and my God." Still it is possible to dodge the law and its flunkey magistrates, and this has been done very neatly by Professor Quidde, who has published a bright article on the famous decadent Roman Emperor, Caligula, in which Emperor William is hit off to perfection. Caligula was always in feverish haste about everything; he liked to shine in military matters; he had also an extraordinary predilection for the sea; he had a passion for the theatre and circus; he liked showy dresses, and was continually changing them; and he was extremely fond of making ostentatious speeches. Professor Quidde points out that Caligula "believed in his Divine right; he believed himself to have a mission from the Deity, and to stand in a particular relation to the Divine Being, to be his selected organ on earth, and for this reason he finally demanded for himself adoration like the Deity." This is a tremendous satire on Emperor William. It all fits him like a glove, but it isn't said of him; it is said of Caligula, and it is historically true. Emperor William cannot do anything more than bite his lips with rage. To put the cap on in public would only make him the laughing-stock of Europe.

A writer in the *Guardian* claims that Jesus did not back up the Old Testament nonsense about Jonah, Daniel, etc., or that at any rate we cannot be sure that he did, for we have not got his own words. He might have added, that neither can we be quite sure of his teaching on any other matter, for the same reason.

Socrates is reported to have exclaimed on reading the dialogues of Plato: "Ye gods, how many fine things has this young man made mesay which I never uttered." Jesus never saw the Gospels, but had he done so he might have cried: "Holy Moses! what absurdities these evangelists have attributed to me."

We came across the following gem in a religious work written early in the present century:—

Let all fruitless searches go
Which perplex and tease us;
We determine naught to know
But a bleeding Jesus.

This beautifully represents the attitude of the truly devout Christian.

The *Star* has been making much of the consecration of the Rev. A. C. A. McLagen as missionary bishop at East Ham. There is a Bishop Ryle and also a Bishop O'Reilly at Liverpool, and the *Star* says it doesn't see why, if there is an Archbishop Maclagan at York, there should not also be an Archbishop McLagen at East Ham. He seems to be mixed up with Baxter, the prophet and provision dealer.

According to the High Church Reunionists, we must recognise the bishops of the Greek, Armenian, and Roman Churches. The only bishops they are not sure deserve recognition are their own. It is said that no fewer than eight hundred Anglican clergymen, who are not satisfied with the validity of their orders, have been ordained at the hands of the Rev. F. G. Lee, vicar of All Saints, Lambeth, who was himself consecrated a bishop by Catholic bishops on the high seas, that being the only place where such a consecration would be valid.

The Rev. James J. Dunlop, pastor of the Roxbury Presbyterian Church, preached a sermon to his congregation on "The Young Man out of the Church," and in the course of his remarks he is reported in the *Boston Herald* of the next day to have said: "According to reliable statistics, less than one-twelfth of the 7,000,000 young men in this country are church members; two-thirds or more of these 7,000,000 do not attend any church. In a word, five out of every seven young men are out of Christ and out of the Church."—*Boston Investigator*.

The Rev. Minot J. Savage, probably the most popular Unitarian Minister in America, is reported to have said: "Suppose that we were to take away the belief in the existence of God, belief in the existence of the soul of man, belief in the future life. What would be the result? If I had my choice, I would rather sweep all away than keep the old beliefs of the last two thousand years. I would cast aside the horrible beliefs which have darkened the world. I would prefer no God to a bad God."

Rev. B. Fay Mills says that both orthodoxy and liberal religion have failed. He might have known this before had he been one of our subscribers.

How these Christians love one another! Down at Warwick there is a Ladies' Charity Guild, and one of the nurses it employs is called Sister Monica. She has worked very hard among the poor, and is highly respected. But as she has left the Church of England and joined the Catholic Church, some members of the former body have been trying to procure her dismissal. This having come to the ears of Lady Warwick, who is too much a woman of the world to be a fanatic, she has called upon the subscribers not "to disgrace our town by an act of bigotry and narrow-mindedness that would rightly bring upon it the censure of all fair-minded people." Should this act of bigotry be perpetrated, her ladyship says she will resign her position as president of the Guild.

The Evangelicals, who begin the year with a week of prayer, are the foremost in lamenting the world's sinfulness. Their lamentation this year induces the suggestion of Elijah, that their god is sleeping, or peradventure on a journey. But perhaps they do not pray aright. Suppose they confined themselves to the simple petition, "O Lord, kill or convert the devil."

Jesus Christ promised that where two or three are gathered together in his name there will he be in the midst of them, and that what they asked they should receive. How poor must they be in faith, or how foolish their prayers, or we should have surely reached the millennium ages ago.

The Rev. T. A. Tuttle, of Winsor Corner, Maine, was arraigned before Judge Stevens, of the Hallowell Municipal Court, for an assault upon Louise Cassidy, who is only sixteen years of age. He confessed to having made the assault, and was bound over to the December term of the Superior Court, his sureties being placed at \$3,000; and, failing to secure bondsmen, he was committed to jail.

The Rev. Milton C. Hambly, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at White Lake and Bethel, New York, was deposed from the ministry by a Court composed of four clergymen and three laymen of the Presbytery of Hudson. According to the evidence presented at the hearing of the case before this court, the preacher had been guilty of insulting women, of gross intoxication, and of other conduct unbecoming in a Christian minister.

The Rev. Bernard Joseph Menge, rector of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church at Cincinnati, O., was found dead in his room at the parochial residence with his prayer-book clasped in his hands while kneeling in the attitude of prayer. The Catholic papers speak of his blessed end. What would they have said had a Freethinker died at a Secular lecture?

The State Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Virginia, before whom Rev. S. M. Watts had been brought to trial on the charge of gross immorality, found him guilty thereof, and he was thereupon expelled from the Church and its ministry.

One column of the New York *Truthseeker* gives the following items of clerical intelligence: "The Rev. David T. Howell, Episcopalian, of Monticello, New York, is under arrest for brutally assaulting his wife.

"The Rev. William W. Bates, an Episcopalian clergyman of Toronto, is charged with stealing goods from a department-store. The goods alleged to have been stolen by him were found upon his person.

The Rev. Montgomery M. Goodwin, who was appointed a chaplain in the navy by President Cleveland in 1894, was recently reported to the navy department for drunkenness. A court-martial was ordered, but the chaplain averted further scandal by resigning.

"The Rev. S. W. D. Brown, of the Congregational Church at Coytesville, New Jersey, has his troubles. He fell in love with the wife of Trustee Danziger, who locked the doors of the sanctuary against him, and threatened to have him ridden out of town on a rail. The dissension has led to six arrests on charges of assault, breaking the peace, and disturbing religious worship.

"The Rev. Charles H. Lester, Presbyterian, will not preach any more for his congregation at Shortsville, N.Y. Investigation of his conduct proves him guilty of gross immoralities long continued. He is a powerful preacher.

"Frank Hammond, a leader in the church in Mount Vernon, Ga., fell in love with the wife of the Rev. E. Jones, and called to see her. The preacher concealed himself in the yard, and the next morning Hammond was found dead. A coroner's jury charges Jones with the murder. The parties are colored.

"The Rev. J. Howard Hand's love of slaughter led him to violate the game laws of the State, and he was arrested at Riverhead, Long Island, last week. He is a Methodist."

A man named Crandall, at Anglica, New York, during the general meeting of Methodist ministers, took a paint-pot and wrote on the windows of several business houses: "Methodist Conference here this week; look out for your women." Crandall was arrested. Such wicked opinions are dangerous—especially to the possessor.

The Salvation Army gets madder as it gets further West. Out Barcoo way, red-shirted Dervishes have taken to masquerading in the names of prominent politicians and others. Thus you will be noisily invited by a "Lord Carington" or a "Chicago Dibbs" to "do a volley," or will be regaled with the life-history—the crimes especially—of "His Nibs Jersey." Poke-bonneted women strive to similarly entertain under the assumed names of the female leaders of society, and the most plain and ordinary and yellow poke-bonneted female of the lot would as soon call herself Sarah Bernhardt as anything else. There is no sense of incongruity about the woman who struggles heavenward with a straw coal-scuttle on her head and a discordant top-note in her mouth.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Complaint has been made again and again that cheap labor is used in the production of Bibles and other religious books in this country. This complaint was renewed in Monday's *Daily News* by Mr. D. Sharpe, General Secretary of the Bookbinders' Society, who says that the remarkable cheapness of Bibles is largely due to the fact that the binding is done, not by skilled workmen in London, but by female labor in Scotland. London bookbinders get not less than thirty-two shillings a week, whereas the weekly wages of women bookbinders in Scotland range from four shillings to ten shillings. By employing women at starvation wages the cheap-Bible societies help to swell the ranks of prostitution. And the cheap Bibles are to help save other people's souls. What a sanguinary farce!

The *Daily News* says of Mrs. Wyke Bayliss's article in the *Magazine of Art* on traditional likenesses of Christ, that "It might be stronger in dates, and less copious in rhetoric." We are bound to say, too, that the *Daily News* writer might have been more frank and sincere, as he seems to be conversant with the facts. His conclusion is that "the bias of all considerations makes in favor of a genuine tradition on which all later artists have worked." Now, if "tradition" is to go for anything, it tells us that Jesus Christ had marked Jewish features, and was decidedly ill-favored. But we never see a Jewish feature in the portraits by Christian artists, and the face is always handsome, or at least attractive. European artists have worked up a fancy portrait of "the Savior," just as they have worked up a fancy portrait of the Madonna. One school varies somewhat from another, but the type is always essentially Caucasian, and not Semitic.

It is amusing to note the fuss the *New York Herald* makes over the "priceless find" in Egypt of some fragment of names the same as those in the first chapter of Matthew. The Rev. C. M. Cobern says: "The very words hold us spell-bound." What nonsense! If such trash was found for the first time to-day apart from the glamor of religion, no one in his senses would think of comparing it in value with the find of a poem by Sappho.

That persistent Romaniser, Lord Halifax, despite the dreadful snub received from the Pope on the subject of Anglican orders, is still infatuated with the illusion of collective re-union and leading the English Church Union to prayer for the same. He ought to know, and probably does, that the collective re-union for which Rome is working is simply re-absorption. The lion is ready to lie down with the lamb inside.

The Christian press is ever anxious to make out that the persecution of Jews is not on account of religion. It is quite true that other causes come in, but can anyone suppose that the persecution would endure, as it has done, if the Churches determinedly set their faces against it? On the contrary, on the Continent the rule is, the more religious the press and the people, the stronger the anti-Semitism.

An old and absurd tradition has been broken through in the appointment of a layman, Dr. Gerald Rendall, as master of the Charterhouse. As a matter of fact, the clerical training unfits men for the posts for which they are usually supposed to be especially suited.

The United States is the chosen land of new sects. The latest of the ever-increasing swarm is the Holy Order of Knee Benders. They do most of their work and all their worship on their knees, and those whose knees are most

camel-like are esteemed the biggest saints. The kneelers worship at a place known as the Holy Knoll.

This year the British Museum will cease to be open in the evenings, but remain open on Sunday afternoons. The evening exhibition was only a device to stave off the Sunday opening, and was never well attended. People who had once got home from work cared not to come to town again for the sake of visiting the Museum. At South Kensington the evening opening is more successful, but the Sunday opening, too, is fairly patronized.

Many people have wondered why Lazarus, after he had come back to his well-nigh stinking corpse, never mentioned anything about the other world. It may not be too late to remedy this, for it seems that Lazarus is still alive. At any rate, a traveller relates that at Tabreez, a town near the boundary between Persia and Georgia, he had great difficulty in finding lodging for the night. A German merchant of the place came to his help, and it was settled that he should take up his abode with a Nestorian Christian who had been employed as a dragoman by several embassies going to Teheren, and who was said to speak English. The host's manner of introducing himself was amusing: "You come with me, all right. You know me? I Lazarus; find me eleventh John in middle chapter; all missionary gentlemen know me, all right."

It happens that the rector of Bermoudsey has been a missionary in Northern India. He says that South London presented a more difficult field of operations. But it is easier to raise money for the heathen who have never heard of Christ than for the heathen who are sick of the very name.

The case brought against the Aberystwith fishermen by the Lord's Day Observance people was dismissed, it having been proved that the offence of fishing took place on the high sea, and, therefore, not within the jurisdiction of the Bench of Aberavon, before whom it was brought. The case was dismissed with costs.

The "gambling hell" of Monte Carlo is run by a Company, which pays the Prince of Monaco £50,000 a year for the "concession." Another sum paid out of the gambling profits is £9,000 for the bishop and clergy of the local Church. The Prince himself, we believe, is a very pious Catholic, with strict ideas on religion.

The Rev. Sinclair Carolin, rector of Wyvenhoe, wants to be paid for the burials of all his parishioners who are interred beyond the parish boundaries, and whose obsequies are performed by other ministers. He had, moreover, the cheek to sue the Parish Council of Wyvenhoe for the money. Judgment, however, was given to the defendants, and the man of God was told that he must seek his remedy from the relatives of the deceased parishioners.

Dean Farrar wants to know how clergymen are going to live on incomes under £200 a year; that is to say, how are they to "maintain a family, educate their children, and live the life of an ordinary gentleman." A correspondent of the *Daily News* says the clergy can live easily on their incomes if they only send their children to ordinary day-schools and cease keeping up the best house in nearly every parish. Further, he wants to know why the clergy want better houses, better clothes, and better food than Jesus Christ and the first Apostles had. But this is playing economy too low. At this rate there would soon be no clergy at all.

The Queen has given, not out of her own pocket, but from a fund for that purpose, £1,000 to the Queen Victoria Clergy Sustentation Fund. It is hoped that the gift will add an impetus to the effort to make curates with £120 a year look with complacency on an archbishop with £15,000.

Sir Francis Jeune granted a judicial separation to the wife of the Rev. Frederick Miles Garrett, formerly of Chalgrave, Bedfordshire, latterly of Bushbridge, near Godalming, on the ground of his adultery with a young woman named Gwendolen Parry. There was no defence. The wife was given the custody of the three children.

You promise heavens free from strife,
Pure truth, and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet is this human life,
So sweet I fain would breathe it still;
Your chilly stars I can forego,
This warm, kind world is all I know.

—William Cory.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 2, Bristol-street Board-school, Birmingham, at 11, subject, "Who Believes the Bible?" 3, "Marie Corelli and the Devil"; 7, "The Way to Heaven."

January 9, Manchester; 16, Liverpool; 23, Camberwell; 30, Athenæum Hall.

February 6, Athenæum Hall; 20, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 2, Leicester; 9 and 16, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road; 23 and 30, Birmingham; 25 and 26, debate at Birmingham; February 13, Camberwell. May 1, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. CARPENTER.—(1) The late William Morris was well known among his friends and close acquaintances as a thorough-going Freethinker—in fact, an Atheist. We like his beautiful prose even better than his beautiful verses. The latter lack the virility of the former. There is lovely poetry in the *Earthly Paradise*, but it is mostly the poetry of dream-land. The characters move like shadows rather than flesh-and-blood men and women. (2) On the whole, there is no better selection of English poems than the late Professor Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* in two volumes. The first volume ends with Wordsworth, the second volume includes pieces from subsequent poets—poets, that is, who have mainly written since 1850. (3) The best student's edition of *Hamlet* at a small price (2s.) is Clark and Wright's, published by the Clarendon Press. The textual notes are full and admirable.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Heine's most important prose work has been translated into English by John Snodgrass, and published by Triebner and Co. It is really well translated. The late James Thomson (B.V.), the poet, projected a translation of this work, which he admired intensely. Had he performed it, we should have had a brilliant addition to our literature.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—W. Horn, 5s. (p). Per R. Forder:—George Anderson, £5 5s.; E. Self, 5s.; H. Swift (Kimberley, S. Africa), 10s.

ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—A. W. Marks, 10s.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—A. W. Marks, 10s. 6d.; George Anderson, £5 5s.

ALTHEIA.—Too late for this week. Shall appear.

A. J. H.—Thanks. See paragraph. We reciprocate your good wishes.

C. LLOYD ENGSTROM.—Owing to the holidays your reply to Mr. Watts came too late for this week's *Freethinker*. It will appear in our next issue. We thank you for your reasonable good wishes.

A. B.—What was the name of the Ayr paper in which the verses appeared?

J. K. MAAGAARD.—We much regret the delay, but it has been unavoidable through press of other matter.

EDWARD PALMER.—Perhaps our correspondent, D. M., will inform you whence the line "God, Devil, Heaven, and Hell are all in thee." It may be from Whinfield's translation of the Rubaiyat, or a paraphrase founded on stanzas in Fitzgerald.

C. WRIGHT.—Certainly, the latest discoveries tend to confirm the position that the Gospels originated in Egypt.

V. PAGE.—Thanks for the enclosures, which we have read with interest. One of the matters is very difficult to comment upon publicly, at least in a journal like ours, which has to be ten times more careful than an ordinary paper.

EDMONTON.—Hugh Miller did commit suicide in 1856. There has been much speculation as to the occasion.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Burnley Gazette—Clarion—Two Worlds—L'Etoile Socialiste—Progressive Thinker—Adult—Free Society—Liberty—Der Armo Teufel—Freidenker—Secular Thought—People's Newspaper—New York Herald—Truthseeker—English Mechanic—New York Public Opinion—Yarmouth Independent—Torch of Reason—Crescent—Carlisle Journal—Isle of Man Times.

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 is due.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 23 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE delivers three lectures to-day (Jan. 2) in the Bristol-street Board School Hall, Birmingham. The subjects are lively, and will doubtless attract overflowing audiences. Before the evening lecture Mr. Foote has promised, on special invitation, to give a Shakespearian reading.

Mr. C. Cohen occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (Jan. 2), and many will like to hear him again after his long absence from London. The next two Sundays the platform will be occupied by Mr. Charles Watts. On the following Sunday (Jan. 23) the hall will be used for a social gathering by the Finsbury Branch. Mr. Foote returns on January 30 to deliver a memorial address on Charles Bradlaugh, that being the anniversary of his death.

London Freethinkers should be obtaining tickets for their Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday, January 10. There is sure to be a good evening in general, and in particular a good dinner, good music, and no doubt some good speeches. The tickets are 4s., as usual, and can be obtained from Miss Vance, at the N. S. S. office, 376-7 Strand, W.C.; from Mr. Forder, 23 Stonecutter-street, E.C.; or from any London Branch secretary.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, January 2, morning and evening, in the Secular Hall, Leicester. His subjects are new and attractive, and should draw crowded audiences.

Our Glasgow friends hold their Annual Conversazione in the Blythswood Assembly Rooms, Bath-street, on Monday, January 3, at 8 p.m. We hope that the New Year festivities will only serve as a preparation for this enjoyable function. Tickets can be obtained from Mr. Baxter, 72 Glassford-street.

In a paragraph on our notice of the Rev. H. J. Taylor's sermon on "The Atheist," the *Southport Guardian* says "the writer is shrewd as usual," and that "such critics seldom give themselves away." Thanks. But would it be easy to say the same of the reverend gentleman?

Mr. A. Lewis had a very good letter in the *Daily News* on the alleged letter of Pontius Pilate, pointing out the insufficiency of the story of Tertullian. He also points to the fact that there is no vestige of the existence of the passage in Tacitus regarding Christus before the fifteenth century.

Famous men are often caricatured. It is a fate that cannot be avoided. Sometimes they are also caricatured after death. Charles Bradlaugh, for instance, if we are to believe *Tit-Bits*, is among the statesmen carved in St Giles's Church, Camberwell. The artist has given him a pair of horns and a humped back. Gladstone has wings growing from his shoulders. Perhaps the artist was only poking fun at the popular superstition—"That's what they think of Bradlaugh" and "That's what they think of Gladstone."

John J. Freeman, in the New York *Truthseeker*, points out that Lincoln's original draft of the famous Emancipation Proclamation did not contain any reference to a deity. It was Secretary Chase who noticed the omission, and who drew up the clause about "the gracious favor of Almighty God." This is a curious corroboration of Lincoln's strong tendency to irreligion.

George Macdonald, we are glad to say, is continuing his witty "Observations" in the New York *Truthseeker*. George has a little boy just old enough to go to the public school, and the record for nine weeks of attendance is as follows: "One bad case of vaccination; three hymns; a corrupted version of the Lord's Prayer; and a case of the measles." "He complacently informs me," George adds, "that he is learning to swear." Altogether, it is not without reason that George doesn't feel inclined to worship the State as a substitute for God Almighty.

Here is a bit of common sense from New York. It appears that the wealthy widow of Alfred E. Beach, of the *Scientific American*, on the advice of spirits married a medium named Henry Rogers. On the advice of the same spirits—there or thereabouts—she also gave the said medium her money. But the New York Supreme Court has decided that, although you may believe in spirits without being positively insane, it is an act of insanity to transfer property on their recommendation.

Why do not Freethinkers in business, with articles to sell

beyond the limits of their own locality, try an advertisement in their own organ—to wit, the *Freethinker*? There is no reason in the world why Freethinkers should not get to trade with each other in this way. At any rate, it is worth a trial. Only it is of no use to go in for one insertion and expect much of a result. An advertisement has to be repeated several times before it really catches on to the readers' attention. We appeal to business Freethinkers in this matter. They may help us, and at the same time lose nothing themselves. It is always difficult to make an advanced journal pay merely on its circulation.

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

Just delivered in Chicago to 5,000 people.

(Continued from page 827.)

WHAT has the Church done? Let us be generous; let us be honest.

There have been thousands of councils and synods. When the clergy have met and discussed and quarrelled, when pope and cardinals, bishops and priests, have added to or explained their creeds, and when they have denied the rights of their fellow men, what useful truth did they ever discover? What valuable fact did they ever find? Did they add to the intellectual wealth of the world? Did they increase the sum of knowledge? What collection of priests, theologians, of ministers, have ever published a useful fact to the human race? Just think of it! I say—and I am generous—not one; not one. If there never had been a theologian on earth, the world would know just as much to-night as it does know, to say the least of it.

I admit that they looked over a number of Jewish books and picked out the ones that Jehovah wrote; I admit that, but did they find any medicinal virtue that dwells in any weed or flower? Let us be honest.

I know that they decided that the Holy Ghost was not created, not begotten, but that he proceeded.

Did they teach us the mysteries of metals, and how to purify the ores in furnace flames? I admit that they shouted, "Great is the mystery of Godliness," but did they show us how to improve our condition in this world; how to have better homes, better clothes, fairer pictures, more perfect statues?

They informed us that Christ had two natures and two wills; but did they give us even a hint as to any useful thing?

They gave us, I admit, predestination, fore-ordination, and just "freewill" enough to go to hell with. I admit that.

Did they show us how to produce anything for food—anything to satisfy the hunger of man? No. But they discovered that a peasant girl who lived in Palestine was the mother of God; and how did they prove it? By a dream. And how did they prove the dream? By a book. How was the book evidence? They said it was inspired!

Did they tell us anything about chemistry—how to combine and separate substances, how to subtract the hurtful, how to produce the useful? They only told us one thing about chemistry—they told us that bread, by making certain motions and mumbling certain prayers, could be changed into the flesh of God, and in the same way wine could be changed to his blood; and this notwithstanding the fact that God never had any flesh or any blood, but has always been a spirit, without body, parts, or passions.

What has the Church done? Let us be honest; let us be generous.

It gave us, I admit, the history of the world, of the stars, of the beginning of all things. It taught the geology of Moses, the astronomy of Joshua and Elijah. It taught the "fall of man" and the atonement; proved that a Jewish carpenter was God; established the existence of purgatory, hell, and heaven. I admit it pretended to have a revelation from God, the Scriptures, in which could be found all knowledge—everything that man could need in the journey of life. Nothing outside of the inspired book, except legends and prayers, could be of any value. Books that contradicted the Bible were hurtful; those that agreed with it were useless. Nothing was of importance except faith, credulity, belief. The Church said: "Let philosophy alone; count your heads; say your prayers;

ask no questions; fall upon your knees; shut your eyes; save your souls."

What, I again ask, has the Church done? Let us be generous.

For centuries it kept the earth flat, for centuries it made all the hosts of heaven travel about this grain of sand; for centuries it clung to "sacred" knowledge, and fought facts with the ferocity of a fiend. For centuries it hated the useful. It was the deadly enemy of medicine. Diseases were produced by devils, and could be cured only by priests, decaying bones, and holy water. Doctors were the rivals of priests. They diverted the revenues.

The Church opposed the study of anatomy—was against the dissection of the dead. Man had no right to find out how he was made. Man had no right to cure disease; God would do that through his priests. Man had no right to prevent disease. Diseases were sent by God as judgments.

The Church opposed inoculation and vaccination, the use of chloroform and ether. It was declared to be a sin, a crime, for a woman to lessen the pangs of motherhood. The Church declared that woman must bear the curse of the most merciful Jehovah.

What—what has the Church done?

It taught that the insane were inhabited by devils. Insanity was not a disease; it was produced by demons. It could be cured by prayers, gifts, amulets, and charms; but all of these had to be paid for. This enriched the Church. These ideas were honestly entertained by Protestants, as well as Catholics—by Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Wesley.

What has the Church done?

It taught the awful doctrine of witchcraft. It filled the darkness with demons, the air with devils, and the world with grief and shame. It charged men, women, and children with being in league with Satan to injure their fellow-men. Old women were convicted of having caused storms at sea; for preventing rain and for bringing frost. Girls were convicted of having changed themselves into wolves, into serpents and toads, and witches were burned for causing diseases, for selling their souls, for blasting corn, and for souring beer. All these things were done with the aid of the Devil, who sought to persecute the faithful, the dear bleating lambs of God.

Satan sought in many ways to scandalize the Church. Sometimes he assumed the appearance of a "holy man" and committed a crime. On one occasion the devil personated a bishop—a bishop renowned for his sanctity. He allowed himself to be discovered and dragged from the room of a beautiful widow. So perfectly did he counterfeit the form and features of the bishop that many who were acquainted well with that prelate were actually deceived, and the widow herself died believing that her lover had been the bishop. All this was done to bring reproach upon "holy men," and scandalize the Church of God.

Hundreds of like instances could be given, as the war waged between demons and priests was very long and very bitter.

These popes and priests, these clergymen, were not all hypocrites; no, they were honest. They believed in the New Testament; they believed in the teachings of Christ, and they knew that the principal business of the Savior was casting out Devils.

What has the Church done?

It made the wife the slave and property of the husband, and it placed the husband as much above the wife as Christ was above the husband. It taught that a nun is purer, nobler, than a mother. It induced millions of pure conscientious girls to renounce the joys of life, to take the veil woven of night and death, to wear the habiliments of the grave—made them believe that they were in some mysterious way the brides of Christ.

For my part, I would as soon be a widow as the bride of a man who had been dead for eighteen hundred years.

The poor, deluded girls imagined that they were in spiritual wedlock—united with God. All worldly desires were driven from their hearts. They filled their lives with fastings, with prayers, with self-accusings. They forgot fathers and mothers, and gave their love to the invisible. They were the victims, the convicts of superstition—prisoners in the penitentiaries of God. They were conscientious, good, sincere—insane. These loving women gave their hearts to a phantom, their lives to a dream.

A few years ago, at a revival, a fine buxom girl was "converted"—"born again"—and in her excitement she

cried: "I'm married to Christ; I'm married to Christ!" In her delirium she threw her arms around the neck of an old man and again cried: "I'm married to Christ." The old man, who happened to be a kind of sceptic, gently removed her hands, saying at the same time: "I don't know much about your husband, but I have great respect for your father-in-law."

What has the Church done?

Priests, theologians, have taken advantage of women, of their gentleness, their love of approbation; they have lived upon their hopes and fears; like vampires, they have sucked their blood; they have made them responsible for the sins of the world, and they have taught them the slave virtues—meekness, humility, implicit obedience. They have fed their minds with mistakes, mysteries, and absurdities. They have endeavored to weaken and shrivel their brains, until to them there would be no possible connection between evidence and belief, between fact and faith.

What has the Church done? Let us be generous.

It was the enemy of commerce, the enemy of business. It denounced the taking of interest for money. Without taking interest for money progress is impossible. The steamships, the great factories, the railways, have all been built with borrowed money—money on which interest was promised, and, for the most part, on which it was paid.

The Church was opposed to fire insurance, to life insurance. It denounced insurance in any form as gambling, as immoral. To insure your life was to declare that you had no confidence in God; that you had more reliance on a corporation than on Divine Providence. It was declared that God would provide for your widow and the fatherless children; and to insure your life was to insult heaven.

What has the Church done?

The Church regarded epidemics as the messengers of God. The "Black Death" was sent by the eternal Father, whose mercy spared some, whose justice murdered the rest. To stop the scourge, they tried to soften the heart of God by kneeling and prostrations, by processions and prayers, by burning incense and making vows. They did not try to remove the cause; the cause was God. They did not ask for pure water, but for holy water. Faith and filth lived, or, rather, died together. Religion and rags, piety and pollution, kept company, and sanctity kept its odor.

What has the Church done?

It was the enemy of art and literature. It destroyed the marbles of Greece and Rome. Why? Beauty was Pagan. It destroyed so far as it could the best literature of the world. It feared thought; but it preserved the scriptures, the ravings of insane saints, the falsehoods of the "fathers," the bulls of popes, the accounts of miracles performed by shrines, by dried blood and faded hair, by pieces of bones and wood, by rusty nails and thorns, by handkerchiefs and rags, by water and beads, and by a finger of the Holy Ghost. This was the literature of the Church.

I admit that the priests were honest—as honest as ignorant; and more could not be said.

What has the Church done?

Christianity claims, with great pride, that it established asylums for the insane. Yes, it did. But the insane were treated as criminals. They were regarded as the homes, as tenement-houses of devils. They were persecuted and tormented. They were chained, flogged, starved, and killed. The asylums were prisons, dungeons; the insane were victims; the keepers were ignorant, conscientious, pious fiends. They were not trying to cure men; they were trying to destroy demons; they were fighting devils. They were not actuated by love, but by hate and fear.

What has the Church done?

It founded schools; yes, schools where facts were denied, where science was denounced, where philosophy was despised. Let us be honest; let us be generous. In Christendom there is but one enemy of science, and that is the orthodox Church. It has established schools where priests were made—where they were made to hate reason, to look upon doubts as the suggestions of the devil, schools where the heart was hardened, where the brain shrivelled, schools in which lies were sacred and truths profane; schools for the more general diffusion of ignorance; schools to prevent thought; schools to suppress knowledge; schools for the purpose of enslaving the world; schools in which teachers knew less than pupils.

What has the Church done?

It has used its influence with God, I admit, to get rain and sunshine, to stop flood and storm, to kill insects, snakes, and wild beasts. It has done what it could to stay pestilence and famine, to delay frost and snow, to lengthen the lives of kings and queens, to protect presidents, to give legislators wisdom, to increase collections and subscriptions. In marriages it has made God the party of the third part. It has sprinkled water on babes when they were named. It has put oil on the dying, and repeated prayers for the dead. It has tried to protect the people from the malice of the devil, from "spooks," from witches and wizards, and from the leering fiends that seek to poison the souls of men. It has endeavored to protect the sheep of God from the wolves of science, from the wild beasts of doubt and investigation. It has tried to wean the lambs of the Lord from the pleasures and joys of life. According to the philosophy of the Church, the virtuous weep and suffer, but the vicious laugh and thrive; the good carry a cross, but the wicked triumph. In the next life this will be reversed. Then, the good will be happy, and the wicked will be damned.

What has the Church done?

It has filled the world with faith and crime. It polluted the fountains of joy. It gave us an ignorant, jealous, revengeful, and cruel God, sometimes merciful, sometimes ferocious; now just, now infamous, sometimes wise, generally foolish. It gave us a devil, cunning, malicious, almost the equal of God; not quite as strong, but quicker; not as profound, but sharper. It gave us angels with wings, cherubim and seraphim, and a heaven with harps and hallelujahs, streets of gold and gates of pearl; and it gave us fiends and imps with wings like bats. It gave us ghosts and goblins, spooks, sprites, and little devils that swarm in the bodies of men; and it gave us hell, where our souls will roast in eternal flames.

Shall we thank the orthodox Church? Shall we thank these Churches for the hell they made here? Shall we thank them for the hell of the future? Let us be honest; let us be generous. Let us thank according to our light.

We must remember that the Church was founded and has been produced by God; that all the popes and cardinals, all the bishops, priests, and monks, all the ministers and exhorters, were selected and set apart, all sanctified, all enlightened by the infinite God; that the holy Scriptures were inspired by the same being, and that all the orthodox creeds were really made by him. Remember that.

We know what these men, filled with the Holy Ghost, have done. We know the part they have played. We know the souls they have saved, the bodies they have destroyed. We know the consolation they have given, the pain they have inflicted, the lies they have told, and the truths they have denied. We know that they convinced millions that celibacy is the greatest of all virtues, that women are a perpetual temptation, the enemies of real, true, genuine godliness; that monks and priests are nobler than fathers, that nuns are purer than mothers.

We know that they taught the blessed absurdity of the Trinity. We know that they told us that God once worked at the trade of a carpenter in Palestine. We know that they divided knowledge into sacred and profane—taught that Revelation was sacred; that Reason was blasphemous; that faith was holy, and facts false; that the sin of Adam and Eve brought disease and pain, vice and death, into the world. We know that they have taught the dogma of Special Providence; that all events are ordered and regulated by God; that he crowns and uncrowns kings, preserves and destroys, guards and kills; that it is the duty of every man to submit himself to the perfect will: no matter how much evil there may be, no matter how much suffering, no matter how much pain and death, man should pour out his heart in thankfulness to God. If he has good luck, he should thank God that it is good; if he has bad luck, fall upon his knees and thank God that it is no worse.

(To be continued.)

LAMBETH Freethinkers will learn with regret of the death of John Robinson, stationer, of Lambeth Walk. He was an old member of the Lambeth Branch of the N.S.S. The funeral was a secular one; Mr. Victor Roger, an old friend of the deceased, officiating at the graveside at Tooting Cemetery.

WOMAN AND THE CHURCH.

As the firmest enemy of modern ethics based upon scientific knowledge of natural laws, there stands the Christian religion, the outspring of the Jewish one, which former, resting upon the principle of the necessary subordination of woman to man, in consequence thereof energetically combats the attempts for equal rights to both sexes, and, as far as lies in its power, ever will and must combat the same.

To the influence of the Christian Church upon social conditions we must, in the first instance, ascribe that, notwithstanding all advances of culture, the mental development of the female sex has been systematically kept back through all these tens of centuries. And not only for the reason that the Christian religion considers woman as a creature inferior to man, owing to the legendary eating of the apple by Eve ("Satan," says St. Augustine, "considered the man to be less credulous and approachable"), but also—and possibly foremost of all—for the reason that the Christian Church knows very well that in woman, intellectually undeveloped, and therefore easy to be led, and ready to lend a willing ear to priestly promptings, it possesses its most powerful ally, and knows that it would lose that powerful support as soon as women, by a thorough mental training and expose, by an elevating education adapted to their condition of mind and of fortune, would be taken away from clerical influences.

As a contrast to the lying statement, which falsifies the historical facts, that the Christian religion has raised the condition of woman, the Christian Church offers to woman nothing but serfdom. And it is the first duty of those women who combat for right and liberty to unite in the fight against religious obscurity, against the powers of darkness and the suppression resting on the Church, that revolution of the mind for which the most elevated thinkers of all time have suffered and fought, and to whose deeds alone we owe all advances in the mental freeing of humanity, and all accomplishments of the awakening consciousness of justice.

—Irma von Troll-Borostjani.

THE EVERLASTING NAY.

FOR ages men have pondered what has proved the Age's burden—

If life be worth the living, if its honey be not gall;
If Right be duly glorified, if just men win the guerdon,
Or "Vanity of Vanities" be sum and end of all.

And quaint fakeers of East and West, with mystic rites
baptismal,
Sing loud and long an ancient Song of Joy and Jasper
Sea,

A wondrous tale of blissful pale beyond the Deep Abysmal
For him who bends a supple back and gives fakeer a fee.

* * *

And ever "is it well?" we ask—while up from valley vernal
Sings Heart in yearning hopefulness her Everlasting Yea!
While Intellect despairing cries from heights of Truth
Eternal

Through Heav'n and Earth and Nether Deep her Ever-
lasting Nay!

—*Sydney Bulletin*.

P. LUTTIG.

Protestantism and Persecution.

The Protestant religion is, for the most part, more tolerant than the Catholic, simply because the events which have given rise to Protestantism have at the same time increased the play of the intellect, and therefore lessened the power of the clergy. But whoever has read the works of the great Calvinist divines, and, above all, whoever has studied their history, must know that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the desire of persecuting their opponents burnt as hotly among them as it did among any of the Catholics, even in the worst days of the papal dominion.—*Henry Thomas Buckle, "History of Civilization in England," vol. i., chap. viii., p. 504; 1858.*

The *English Mechanic* is always full of a variety of information. The latest member contains a cure for the tobacco crave which we have not tried, but could safely recommend to those who might want to.

W. M. Thompson, L.C.C., Editor of *Reynolds*, lectures on 'Eve and her Eden,' in the French Room, St. James' Hall, on Monday, January 3rd, under the auspices of the Legitimation League.

FAILURES OF THE AGES.

THERE was a Man; stupid was he, and brutish. Yet he harried wild beasts and wilder men. It chanced that men came upon him and upon his child, and the child they would have taken for their food; but the Man withstood them, so that he was slain, and, after all, the child was taken by the men. Their children wondered at the Man.

There was a Man; ignorant was he, and fierce. Yet he fought with beasts and savage men. And it happened that men fell upon his villagers, and most of them escaped; but the Man stayed behind defending women. The Man was killed, and the women were carried away by the men. Their children made a mound above the body of the Man.

There was a Man; weak was he, and dull. Yet he strove with chiefs and warrior priests. It befell that when the tribe went man-catching the Man refused to help; therefore, the priests commanded that he be burnt, and the tribe went all the same. For the Man their children built a tomb.

There was a Man; poor was he, and unlearned. Yet he strove with the unthinking and with savage creeds. It came to pass that the rulers went astray, and he cried out to them. The rulers heeded him not, so that his heart was broken; then he died, and the people mocked his sayings. Their children called the Man a prophet of the Lord.....

Yet in every striving it was given to the Man to see that it was best to be true to the highest that was known.

—*Bolton Hall.*

BOOK CHAT.

TIME was when Kipling was *anathema maranatha* to the gentry of the black robe. They voted his ballads "vulgar," and his yarns "immoral"; he was "an unsaved worldling," only one degree less obnoxious than Zola himself. But mark the change. The *Recessional Hymn* has been published, with its cant refrain—an effusion which, had it appeared eight years ago, would have caused scarcely a word of comment, but at which, now that Rudyard has been hoisted to fame by appreciative (if unregenerate) millions, the parsonic person holds up his hands and unctuously exclaims: "How treuly be-cautiful"; calls Kipling "the great poet of the British Empire," and preaches a sermon from said refrain, on to which he grafts sundry Divine maxims. So Kipling has conquered the realms of darkness and light, and, willy-nilly, is canonized a saint of the second magnitude.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

* * *

We picked up the other day the volume of *The Isis*, which was edited by Eliza Sharples Carlile in 1832, during the imprisonment of her husband and R. Taylor. It is dedicated "To the young women of England for generations to come, or until superstition is extinct." It begins: "You would be thought beautiful; be so. Avoid superstition, which makes the countenance haggard, and is at war with virtue because it is not a truth. A superstitious woman is never beautiful; while expanding knowledge will put smiles and charms on any face." Eliza Sharples Carlile shared her husband's courage, and had more than his tact in this dedication, which we commend to the attention of Mr. R. Le Gallienne.

* * *

The Isis contains much interesting matter. Discourses by the editress, by Frances Wright, and Shepherd Smith are given in full. There are some letters from Carlile and Taylor, the devil's chaplain, and accounts of the deaths of Stephen Girard, Goethe, Bentham, and Sir W. Scott. There is also a letter from G. W. M. Reynolds, the founder of *Reynolds's* newspaper, proclaiming his unbelief in revelation, and some information about Robert Owen, the Rev. E. Irving, and other celebrities of the period.

* * *

Admirers of the genius of James Thomson will be glad to hear that "The City of Dreadful Night" and a selection of Thomson's poems are to be published in a cheap form by B. Dobell early in the coming year.

* * *

By the way, when is to be issued the volume of selections from the poems of another too-little-appreciated poet, John Barlas ("Evelyn Douglas"), who, as a sonneteer, has equalled any of the poets of our generation? Such a verdict concerning an unknown writer needs defence. Ample may be found in the volume entitled *Love Sonnets*. Since these are scarcely suitable for the *Freethinker*, we transcribe another from an earlier volume, when the poet's powers were less mature:—

Ope, starry mystery of the eternal skies!

To-night I walk the verges of the grave;

The hallow things that charm life and enslave

Fall off: the gaunt world stands without disguise.

Ope, starry mystery, to the world-sick eyes:
Unfold, though aching void, to thoughts that crave
The secret of thy secret, though I rave.
Better to rave than live in sick surmise.

The moon and all the stars about the pole
Swim round me, and I travel in dull pair,
A dumb Want in the solitude of Time.
What means it all? Whence comes, and to what goal?
Whence, what am I whose life seems all in vain?
Earth, sea, and sky stand silent and sublime.

* * *

Another, in a very different strain, may be given from
Confessions of an Anarchist:—

Freedom is come among us. Winged from hell,
She rises with the serpents in her locks.
Kings, priests, republics, with her fiery shocks,
She breaks and scatters daily. This is well.
But, though all other false dominions fell,
There is one tyranny based on the rocks
Of nature and necessity that mocks
And breaks all waves that 'gainst its base rebel—
The union of the dove against the deer
That follows not their path, of bird with bird
Against the lonely one of alien song.
The league against the brave of those that fear,
The hate for isolation of the herd,
The banding of the weak to crush the strong.

* * *

This is by no means Barlas's best; but those who do not
recognise that the writer is a poet may question whether
there is any poetry in them.

* * *

A biography of Caspar Schmidt (Max Stirner), the first
German Anarchist, has been written by J. H. Mackay, and
will be published in February.

* * *

A very good criticism of a recent attempt at the rehabili-
tation of teleology appears in *Natural Science* for December,
from the pen of F. H. Perry Coste, B.Sc., and has been
reprinted in pamphlet form. Professor Schiller attempts to
recast the argument from design, but Mr. Coste points out
that he fails to prove that variations are definite rather
than indefinite, or that such definite variations can be
attributed to no mundane forces.

* * *

R. de Villiers opens the January number of the *Uni-
versity Magazine* with an article on Vegetarianism. L.
Winkworth follows with a paper on "The Spirit of
Revenge in the Bible." He contends that Bible-belief is
responsible for keeping old views of punishment, instead of
modern ones of reformation. John Vickers, author of *The
Real Jesus*, has a study on Christian Origins. David
Martin calls attention to "A Neglected Stevenson"—viz.,
the sketch of Villon in *The New Arabian Nights*. W. Mann
writes of "The Babylonian Origins of Christianity," and
there are a number of other interesting articles.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MORAL INSTRUCTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the letters on the above thought-evoking theme,
from your distinguished contributors, Messrs. Plain Speaker
and Gould, which appear in the *Freethinker* of the 19th ult.,
it occurs to me that those gentlemen very greatly over-
estimate, in this matter, the powers of the schoolmaster,
and very much under-estimate the tendencies and forces of
present-day conditions of industrial life to conduce to the
moral improvement of the masses. Both, it seems to me,
attach too much importance to words, and too little to
actual facts.

Reserving for awhile what I have to say in reply to the
courteous criticism of Plain Speaker, I will deal with two
questions that Mr. F. J. Gould puts in his answer to me.
(1) "When the railways came in, did they make the British
nation more loyal to duty?" (2) "When torpedoes were
invented, did they wean the nations from the wicked lust of
war?"

To the first question I will answer with a thundering,
emphatic Yes. Proof: in less than twenty years from their
advent, England gave freedom to her slaves at a cost of
£20,000,000. The previous use of steam as applied to the
cartage of coal, to the working of the power-loom, to the
spindle—that made England wealthy enough to do it. What
the ethics of highly-cultured Greece, of stoical Rome, of all-
powerful Christianity, were not able to accomplish in
twenty-five centuries, we may safely claim, was accom-
plished by this modern Frankenstein—the steam-engine—
in less than fifty years. If the abolition of slavery at such
a cost was not an act of public duty, or a proof of "loyalty
to duty," I must confess my inability to define it.

As an improver of morality the inventors and improvers

of the steam-engine deserve the unbounded gratitude of
mankind. The railway service of England to-day employs
about 200,000 men and boys, every one of whom, to retain
his place, be it ever so humble, is bound to be cleanly, civil,
sober, industrious, and honest, and, let me also add,
punctual. This vast and important industry not only
serves as a means of livelihood for its vast army of
employees, but also as a grand moral training college, in
which good behavior is both respected and substantially
rewarded.

This is clearly proved by the well-known fact that almost
all the clever and vigilant engine-drivers, those civil,
obliging, smartly-clad guards, those gentlemanly station-
masters, have, for the most part, risen from the humbler
grades of their respective branches of the service to their
present responsible and respectable situations, as a result
of good moral characters. In a word, the whole of the
present-day Industrialism is one vast moral improver.

In his second question, it occurs to me that Mr. Gould
deviates very far from his wonted candor when he makes
answer to my claim of the great and useful inventions of
our epochs as great moralizing forces; he merely instances
the torpedo, appending thereto the above question, to
which I at once reply that, let one great naval battle take
place in which some swaggering nation finds the superior
number and armor of her ships; of no avail against the
small—but well equipped with torpedoes—fleet of some
weak little State to such a degree as to suffer a disastrous
defeat; any such event would do more to "wean the
nations from the lust of war" than all the moral instruction
of which the human mind is capable either of giving or
receiving—at any rate, far more than the popguns, com-
paratively speaking, of the Armada, or even of the battle of
the Nile.

The products of inventive genius to which I referred
were cheap linen, general clothing, fuel, artificial light,
travelling (this latter not only cheap, but also rapid and
comfortable), printing, medical aid, postal service, cheap
freightage, and many others that space will not allow me to
specify. All these we owe to the intellect. They are all
purely secular, both in their inception and application. On
them I base my plea for a purely secular, intellectual
education for all our State-educated children.

T. J. THURLOW.

THE BRUTAL LASH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I call the attention of your readers to a
resolution of local interest which was passed by the Com-
mittee of the Criminal Law and Prison Reform Department
of the Humanitarian League at their last meeting, as
follows?—

"This Committee, having remarked the presentation made
by the Grand Jury at the Durham Autumn Assizes in favor
of the extension of corporeal punishment to cases of assaults
upon women and children, most earnestly protest against
any extension whatever of this most brutal and degrading
form of punishment." JOSEPH COLLINSON (*Hon. Sec.*)

PROFANE JOKES.

"You heard what I said of that place where there shall be
wailing and gnashing of teeth?" said an English rector to
one of his parishioners who was noted for her gossiping.
"Well, as to that," said she, "if I 'as anything to say, it be
this—let them gnash their teeth as 'as 'em—I ain't."

Gambart, the art-dealer, sent Holman Hunt to the Holy
land to paint a picture similar to "The Light of the
World." Hunt returned with "The Scapegoat," which so
disappointed Gambart that he refused to accept it. Seeing
Linnell, the painter, shortly afterwards, he plaintively
said: "I wanted a nice religious picture, and he bainted
me a great coat."

"Now, Thomas," said a certain bishop, after taking his
servant to task one morning, "who is it that sees all we do,
and hears all we say, and knows all we think, and who
regards even me in my bishop's robes as but a vile worm of
the dust?" And Thomas replied: "The missus, sir."

"Be quick with your breakfast, or we shall be late for
church." "May I leave it until we get back?" "Why,
dear, don't you like it?" "Oh, yes! but then I shall have
something to think about during church time!"

Christian Parson—"I am surprised, Miss Spokelet, I am
indeed surprised, to see you cycling on the Sabbath day."
Fair Cyclist—"I should think you are, Mr. Chokey. Why
I only started learning yesterday afternoon!"

A "new light" Scotchman was once holding forth against
the doctrine of eternal torments. "Hoot, toot," replied his
brother Scot, "you should be thankful you've got a hell to
gang tac." "Well," retorted the other, "let those be domned
who wish to be domned."

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. Cohen, "What is the Use of Religion?"
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTION (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, E. Pack, "Papists and Protestants." December 31 (New Year's Eve), 8.30, Fancy Dress Ball.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, J. O. Gordon, "The Poor Law Administration in Camberwell"; 7, Entertainment and Dance.
EAST LONDON BRANCH (King's Hall, 83 and 85 Commercial-road, E.): 6.45, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Other Religions."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school.
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY ("Barley Mow," Horseferry-road): 7.30, R. Forder, "All About Christmas."
WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, Ida White, "The Priests of Nature."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, A. lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): G. W. Foote—11, "Who Believes the Bible?" 3, "Marie Corelli and the Devil"; 7, "The Way to Heaven."
GLASGOW January 3 (Blythswood Assembly Rooms, Bath-street): 8 p.m., Conversation.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): C. Watts—two lectures.
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Closed till January 9, when Mr. Foote will lecture.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, M. D. O'Brien, "Early Christian Heresies."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Row-road, London.—January 2, Athenæum Hall; 9, Camberwell; 16, Chester; 23, Sheffield; 30, Manchester. February 6, Manchester; 13 and 14, Birmingham; 20 and 27, Liverpool. March 6, Liverpool.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—January 8 to 12, Mission to Stanley; 23 and 30, Manchester. March 6 to 11, Mission at Derby; 13, Birmingham.

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 2.45.

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

BATLEY.—Positivist Meeting at Mr. Joseph Walker's, Primrose Hill, Lady Anne-road, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30.

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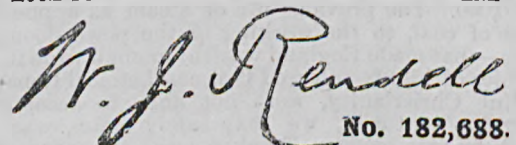
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