

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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THE FRENCH TROUBLE.

FOR the sake of Freethought and human progress in general it is to be hoped that the French Republic will weather all the storms it may have to encounter. Its troubles have been great and many, and twice at least it was at the point of shipwreck. Fortunately the Republic, as Thiers said, is the government that least divides Frenchmen. In that fact, more than in any other, has lain the secret of its security. Yet it would be idle to ignore the strength of the parties and interests adverse to the Republic. Imperialism as a cause is dead for want of a living centre, but the spirit of Imperialism—a bastard cross between Democracy and Cæsarism—is far from being extinct. Royalism, too, is strong among the “classes” and in Catholic circles, which are naturally monarchical. And it would be a great mistake to suppose that the Catholic Church is played out in France. The leaders of thought are mostly Atheists or Positivists, and Freethought is common among the workmen in the towns. But the peasantry are not so alienated from the Church, and the women are still its devotees; and as the women control the children the Church is able to maintain its hold upon the rising generation. There is another element of reaction in the army. The French were always a military people, and although they have had to lie low since 1870 they have spent money lavishly upon their great fighting machine, and they are very proud of it. “Vive La République!” is a popular cry, but “Vive L’Armée” sends a deeper thrill into the common heart. And the danger of this is obvious. Boulanger was nothing but a showy soldier. Had he been a man of brains and courage he might have overthrown the Republic; and should a soldier of genius arise, on whom all eyes were fastened, there is no saying what might happen in a country which is still so charged with the spirit that made men die in myriads for the ambition of Napoleon.

Bishop Berkeley, in his profound and subtle *Querist*, asked whether nations might not sometimes go mad as well as individuals. History, we think, gives an affirmative answer to the question. At the present moment the political atmosphere of France is electric. The Dreyfus case is not in itself the cause of this condition. It is rather one of the symptoms. Behind it are two important sentiments. One is hatred of the Jews, the other is love of the army. Both of these sentiments have grown to a fanaticism. The average Frenchman appears just now to love the army as a man sometimes loves a mistress, detesting everybody who does not think her perfection, and taking her side blindly in every quarrel. Of course the Government gives another reason—a reason of State—for not reopening the Dreyfus case, and for keeping up the old secrecy; but what it really appeals to is the “honor of the army.” With regard to the Jews, it is doubtless true that their successful operations in finance excite the animosity of their Gentile rivals; but there is no

proof that they are exceptional sinners against the rules of the game. On the whole, the Anti-Semitic agitation is highly discreditable to France. Some of it seems to be a bad contagion from Russia through the recent alliance between the Eastern Czardom and the Western Republic. Much of it is part of the Anti-Semitic wave which is passing over the greater part of Europe. Catholic countries are peculiarly liable to this disorder. The Catholic Church has always hated Jews, and has lost no opportunity of persecuting and oppressing them. Stories still float about in many parts of Europe, and are devoutly believed by millions of ignorant and credulous Christians, that the Jews periodically steal Christian children and murder them, using their blood in certain obscure religious rites. While such nonsense as this finds ready credence we may still look for outbreaks of the Jew-Hunt which used to be the standing disgrace of Christendom.

The Dreyfus case is itself a painful one, and some of its incidents are simply disgraceful. A chivalrous people like the French must be temporarily demented to reproach the wife and brother of Captain Dreyfus for devoting their lives to establishing his innocence. He may be guilty after all, but the devotion of his wife and brother should command universal respect. Should the prisoner be innocent, as several leading Frenchmen believe on what they call good evidence, there is something inexpressibly terrible in his fate. It would be more merciful to kill him than to keep him chained and caged like a wild beast, and subject to the most frightful indignities. He is not even allowed to receive the originals of his wife's letters. They are copied out for him. An atrocious cruelty indeed, worse than stripes and blows. What the prisoner wants, what carries solace to his loneliness, is not merely the contents of his wife's letters, but the very words her hand has traced, the very paper on which she has written. A word blotted by a tear would be more precious than all the rest. All honor to Zola for the great stand he has taken in this matter. Heroism is better than books, for the world is always in want of it. When statesmen palter, and soldiers turn cowards, it is good to see a man of letters start up from his arm-chair and champion the highest interests of humanity. When Calas was broken on the wheel, and all else were dumb at the outrage, it was Voltaire who arose with the one weapon he had to fight iniquity. It was only a pen, but it was the pen of Voltaire, and it clove the ranks of bigotry and cruelty like the sword of Roland. Zola is also a Freethinker, and has proved himself worthy of the great tradition. Dreyfus may be guilty, but he was tried in the dark, and the evidence against him is kept in continued obscurity. Zola calls upon France to be just and fear not, to face the light, to be true to herself. And whether he wins or loses in this struggle, he has shown a rare courage. It is hardly credible that the French Government will have him tried in secret too. That would be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Republic itself.

G. W. FOOTE.

GRANT ALLEN'S "IDEA OF GOD."*

(Continued from page 34.)

I HAVE sketched on pp. 19-22 of *Footsteps of the Past* the way in which I conceive that ghost-worship evolved. I gladly confess that Mr. Allen has added much to the completeness of the ideas there indicated. Mr. Allen says:—

"In the earliest stage of all—the stage where the actual bodies of the dead are preserved—gods as such are, for the most part, unknown; it is the corpses of friends and ancestors that are worshipped and revered. For example, Ellis says of the corpse of a Tahitian chief that it was placed in a sitting posture under a protecting shed; 'a small altar was erected before it, and offerings of fruit, food, and flowers were daily presented by the relatives, or the priest appointed to attend the body.'"

Very pertinent is the citation from Mr. H. O. Forbes on the customs of the people of Buru:—

"The dead are buried in the forest in some secluded spot, marked often by a *merang* or grave-pole; over which at certain intervals the relatives place tobacco, cigarettes, and various offerings. When the body is decomposed, the son or nearest relative disinters the head, wraps a new cloth about it, and places it in the Matakau at the back of his house, or in a little hut erected for it near the grave. It is the representative of his forefathers, whose behests he holds in the greatest respect."

It is natural in uncultured man to still seek for guidance from those who had been his protectors in life. In the grave-stake Mr. Allen finds the origin of the wooden idol, and in the little hut the origin of the temple or praying-house. Mr. William Simpson, who has doubtless visited and sketched more temples in every part of the world than any living man, in his very able treatise on *The Worship of Death*, published in "Ars Quatuor Coronatorum," has brought out the fact that all the great temples are founded on tombs or relics of the dead. Even the Jewish ark of the covenant was probably a coffin, and by tradition contained the body of ancestral Adam. Every Catholic altar is properly a reliquary, containing a portion of a dead body; and in the symbolism of the Mass the chalice containing the wine or blood of the god, placed over the stone with the relic, preserves the old custom of offerings at graves. The first sacrifices were offerings of food. In China they have a saying, "Whatever is fit for food is fit for sacrifice."

One origin of priesthood is found in chiefs leaving, as the Incas of Peru did, all their treasure to maintain the places of worship in which their bodies were laid. Mr. Allen remarks:—

"Obviously, the importance and magnificence of the temple will react upon the popular conception of the importance and magnificence of the god who inhabits it. And conversely, as the gods grow greater and greater, more art and more constructive skill will constantly be devoted to the building and decoration of their permanent homes. Thus in Egypt the tomb was often more carefully built and splendidly decorated than the house; because the house was inhabited for a short time only, but the tomb for eternity."

To the present day the god depends largely on his house for impressiveness.

From a very early period men have believed the dead to eat and drink, whether as corpse, as mummy, as ghost of buried friend, or as ethereal spirit of cremated chief. The only friends of early man were those of his own kin or tribe, related by a bond of blood-brotherhood. As an offering of food or blood was necessary to establish a covenant with man, so was it with the gods. We may see this in the story of Abraham's covenant with Jahveh (Genesis xv.), and in the rite of circumcision. Early man being a savage warrior, delighting in slaughter, his ghosts or gods have a craving for blood. Mr. Allen mentions in this connection that, as a rule, both ghosts and gods are rather thirsty than hungry. He says:—

"I take the explanation of this peculiar taste to be that blood and other liquids poured upon the ground of graves or at altar-stones soon sink in, and so seem to have been drunk or sucked up by the ghost or god; whereas meat and solid offerings are seen to be untouched by the deity to whom they are presented. A minor trait in this blood-loving habit of the gods is

seen in the fact that the Mexicans also gave the god to drink fresh blood drawn from their own ears, and that the priests likewise drew blood from their legs, and daubed it on the temples. Similar mitigations of self-immolation are seen elsewhere in the Attis-priest drawing blood from his arms for Attis, in the Hebrew Baal-priests 'cutting themselves for Baal,' and in the familiar Hebrew rite of circumcision. Blood is constantly drawn by survivors or worshippers as an act of homage to the dead or to deities."

It is notable that, while the Levitical law prohibits making cuts or marking of the flesh in honor of the dead, the Jews to this day cut their clothes on the death of a father—a curious instance of the survival of a substitutionary sacrifice.

Mr. Grant Allen's chapters on Sacrifice and Sacrament and the Doctrine of the Atonement are most important ones, and I hope to return to them at some future time. It would, however, be quite unfair to pass over his most original exposition of the origin of cultivation and of corn and wine-gods, which, since one of the most important steps ever taken by man was the substitution of an artificial for a natural basis of food, is indeed a most valuable contribution to the history of civilization.

To the question, How did certain men come first to know that by clearing ground of weeds, and keeping it clear, they could promote the growth of desirable food-stuffs? Mr. Allen finds the answer in the practice of earth burial, and the custom of offering seeds as food for the dead. Burial is the only object for which very low savages ever turn or dig the ground. The obvious result of placing food-stuffs on graves is that seeds must often grow up with a luxuriance which would strike the imagination of the early hunter. Especially will this be the case with such plants as maize, corn, rice, pease, beans, or millet—annuals of rapid growth. The conclusion of the savage would be that the plants were the return made by the ghost for the food offered to him. That this is so is proved by the early religious ceremonies in connection with agriculture, all of which needed a human sacrifice. When the Catholic priest in Brittany sprinkles holy water on the field, he is, like the lady who smashes a wine bottle on a ship's prow at its launch, maintaining an innocent survival of an old rite in which blood was originally an essential element. The victim, in ancient belief, literally gave his or her life that others might live. The victim, too, becomes the god which gives the food, and to partake of his flesh and his blood is to enter into communion with the god. From human sacrifices to the mere sprinkling of a field with holy water there were a variety of substitutions, as of sacred animals, sacramentally eaten as representatives of the corn-god. A substitute of straw was used for the human corn-god, and for the flesh and blood of the victim bread and wine became the representatives, and were sacramentally partaken.

The natives of Nicaragua at the time of maize-gathering were accustomed to sacrifice a man to the gods of the harvest. Around the altars were strewn grains of corn. Over these the worshippers stood, and with flint knives let blood from the most sensitive of their bodies, the drops falling on the grains. These were then eaten as holy food, part of the sacrifice. A similar ritual obtained in Peru, where a human victim was immolated, and the spotless "Virgins of the Sun" were deputed to mingle his blood with meal and bake it into small cakes. These were distributed among the people and eaten, and one was sent to every shrine and temple in the kingdom. Precisely such a rite prevailed among the ancient Germans. At the harvest supper the spirit of the corn, represented latterly under the form of an animal, but in earlier days as a child, was slain and eaten by the harvest-homers. It was the literal and corporeal union of man and the god.*

Among the Aztecs a youth was chosen and named for the god. For months his every wish was gratified. Then he was slain on the altar, and his fresh blood mixed with dough, which was divided among the worshippers and eaten. Thus they became partakers of the Divine Nature.

Mr. Allen gives us details of many such ceremonies, which bring us to the very threshold of the central mystery of Christianity. The full bearing of his work on the elucidation of that faith has yet to be considered.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

* *The Evolution of the Idea of God; An Inquiry into the Origins of Religion.* By Grant Allen. (Grant Richards, 9 Henrietta-street.)

* *Brunton's Primitive Religions.* In my chapters on "Sacrifices and Scapegoats" and "Killing the God" I have given other instances of Pagan Eucharists.

IS MAN A SINNER?

BEFORE answering this question, it is necessary that we should understand what is meant by the term "sin." It has been defined as "a violation of the moral law." But professing Christians do not regard it in this sense. With them it implies an offence against God, and may, or may not, involve any wrong to man. Or, if there should be a wrong done to a fellow being, it is not that which constitutes the most heinous part of the sin. What, however, is the moral law here referred to? It is difficult to apprehend its precise meaning when applied to what theologians term sin. With them a moral act is tested from a religious standpoint. And here the perplexity comes in, inasmuch as there are so many different religionists who hold conflicting views as to the rightness of an act. For instance, many actions which Roman Catholics consider moral Protestants deem the very opposite, and similar divergency obtains between orthodox believers and Unitarians. It is the same with nations. In ancient Egypt so great a crime was it considered to kill that beautiful bird, the ibis, that whoever did so was put to death. The Spartans were encouraged to steal, it being thought quite moral to do so. Falsehood and deceit were deemed praiseworthy among the members of the early Christian Church. In fact, lying was regarded as a virtue if it were indulged in for pious purposes; and St. Paul evidently justified such acts. Hence he says: "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (Romans iii. 7).

The popular Christian notion of sin is, that it is not necessarily the violation of the moral law, but of some "Divine" law, which is supposed to be higher than any that is based upon human authority. Now, the questions here suggest themselves, What is this alleged "divine law," and can it be known to man? If it can be known, why has not an intelligent application of it been given to the world? On the other hand, if we are ignorant of its nature, how can it be acted upon? Theology teaches that the human race became sinners in consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve. But admitting, *pro tem.*, the theory in Genesis to be true, was any sin committed by those primitive progenitors? Samuel Taylor Coleridge says: "Sin must be a state originant in the will of the actor, entirely independent of circumstances extrinsic to that will." The Bible, however, records three circumstances over which Adam and Eve could have had no control—namely, the fruit which was "pleasant to the eyes," the desire to partake of the fruit, and the serpent which tempted the woman to eat that which was "good for food." Is an act upon the part of a person sinful if he or she is compelled to perform it? In my opinion, it is not. Besides, this act in the Garden of Eden was intended by God either to be performed or not. If he intended it, there could be no sin; while, if he did not intend it, he being omnipotent, man could not do it in spite of him. It is no answer to say, "God permitted it." A God all good could not sin, and to give man permission to sin would be admitting that a finite being could do more than an infinite being, and also that which he (the infinite being) was incapable of accomplishing.

If it is urged that the "Divine law" is set forth in the Bible, my answer is: The commands there given in the name of God are so contradictory that it is impossible to obey one without violating another. Take, for example, the following: "Honor your father and mother." This cannot be done if it be true that no man can be a disciple of Christ unless he hates his father and mother (Luke xiv. 26); "Thou shalt not kill," yet God commands the people of Israel to "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. xv. 3); "Thou shalt not commit adultery," yet we read: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee [David] out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun" (2 Sam. xii. 11, see also Deut. xxi. 10 to 14). It is precisely the same in reference to the prohibiting of lying, deceit, and cruelty. These are all rendered "null and void" by such Bible commands as are given in 1 Kings xxii. 23; 2 Chronicles. xviii. 18-22; 2 Thessalonians 2-11; Ezekiel xiv. 9; Jeremiah iv. 10; and Deute-

ronomy vii. 16. Even the advice to be sober is of little avail when we are told to "give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Proverbs xxxi. 6-7). From these passages it will be seen how useless it is to talk of a "Divine law," for, supposing it to exist, we have no means of knowing what it is. How, then, can sin pertain to that of which we know nothing?

The reader is reminded not to confound sin with crime; all crimes are sins, but all sins are not crimes. The time was when impiety and unbelief were looked upon and dealt with as crimes; but through the influence of Freethought principles these "offences" are no longer regarded as being criminal, although they are still held by orthodox believers to be sinful. What, then, is sin according to the Secular view? It is this: the committal of acts which we know will prove injurious both to individuals and to society. If it is contended that this definition of sin necessitates the performance of an act before its results can be known, I reply that experience has taught us what the consequences of certain acts are. We know that falsehood is injurious, because it tends to destroy that confidence which is necessary to maintain the stability of the community; that dishonesty is injurious, because it robs others of what rightly belongs to them; that licentiousness is injurious, because it impairs the physical health and deteriorates the moral character; that injustice is injurious, because it is a wrong against others; that avarice is injurious, because it tends to the excessive accumulation of wealth in one direction, and to the spread of poverty in another; that slander is injurious, because it is a mean attack upon personal character; and, finally, that persecution is injurious, because it is an interference with mental liberty, which is the right of every member of the human race. These are the sins recognised by Secularists, and their evil cannot be avoided by any of the theologies of the world.

It is apparent that, in the conventional sense in which the word "sin" is employed, it may be completely separated from vice or immorality. Two sets of duties are recognised by professors of Christianity: one relating to God, and the other to man. As before stated, the latter are largely influenced by the former; but still it is the violation of the law arising out of the former that constitutes sin, and the sinner is he who is guilty of such violation. We have, therefore, a class of acts which are right or wrong, independent altogether of any sort of relationship that they may sustain, apart from theology, to mankind, and these acts will be deemed sinful or holy in proportion as they fulfil certain religious conditions. For example, a man planting a few flowers in his garden on Sunday would be held in Canada and in some parts of Scotland to be guilty of a grave offence against God, although he had not in any way injured his fellow man, or in the smallest degree violated any moral law, except such as was supposed to be involved in the religious code. Of course the disservice of the moral and religious duties is not so marked to-day as in the past, simply because religion, as a distinct thing, is less recognised. The intelligent preacher of the present time—at least among the Protestants and outside the ultra-orthodox party—devotes himself to expounding moral duties and enforcing such acts of conduct as, whatever their relationship may be to a future world, have very much to do with the life here. But in the past, and even now among Roman Catholics and the extreme orthodox party, the religious duties greatly exceed the moral ones, and hence sin is more common than immorality, and the sinner, consequently, much more conspicuous than the vicious man. CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

"Believe (me), or be damned!" is the edict of selfishness, whether in or out of the orthodox churches.—Lucy A. Mallory.

"The pope is infallible," says the Catholic. "The Bible is infallible," says the Protestant. "Science is our best guide," says the Secularist.

God was obliged to have a blood atonement in order to keep him from letting his children go to an eternal hell, and now those that don't believe in the atonement are going there anyway. "Oh, how he loves!" Loves to fry the fat out of us, we mean.

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

BY COLONEL INGERSOLL.

Just delivered at Chicago to 5,000 people.

(Concluded from page 37.)

A FEW years ago a few men became wicked enough to use their senses; wicked enough to look; wicked enough to listen. They began to see; they began to reason. They forgot heaven and hell long enough to take some interest in this world. They began to examine soils and rocks. They noticed what had been done by rivers and seas. They found out something about the crust of the earth. They found that most of the rocks had been stratified and deposited in water. They found that these rocks put together would make 70,000 feet in thickness. They found that the coal was once vegetable matter. They made the best calculations they could. They found that it would require many million years to produce this coal.

They examined the chalk cliffs; they found they were composed of microscopic shells of minute organisms—that is to say, of the atoms of these shells, or dust; that this had settled over areas as large as Europe, and in some places the chalk was a mile in depth; and that this required many millions of years. Lyell, the highest authority on the subject, says that it must have required, to cause the changes that we know, at least two hundred million years.

Think of these vast deposits caused by the slow falling of infinitesimal atoms of impalpable dust, through the silent depths of ancient seas! Think of the microscopical forms of life, constructing their minute houses of lime, giving life to others, leaving their mansions beneath the waves, and so through countless generations building the foundations of islands and of continents.

Go back of all life that we now know—back of all the flying lizards, the armored monsters, the hissing serpents, the fanged horrors; back of the Laurentian rocks to the cozoon, the first of living things that we have found; go back of all mountains, seas, and rivers, back to the first incrustation of the molten world; go back of wave, of fire, and robe of flame, back, back to the time when all the substance of the earth blazed in the glowing sun with all the stars that now wheel about the central fire; go back; think of the days and nights that lie between! Think of the centuries, like withered leaves of time, that strew the desert of the past! Think, think of the countless ages!

Nature does not hurry. Time cannot be wasted—cannot be lost. The future remains eternal, and all the past is as though it had not been—just as though it were to be. The infinite knows neither loss nor gain.

We know a little something of the history of the world. The worldly have told it to us. We know a little something of the human race; and we know that man has lived and struggled through want and war, through pestilence and famine, through ignorance and crime, through fear and hope, on the old earth for millions and millions of years.

At last, at last we know that the infallible popes, and the countless priests and clergymen, the gentlemen who were "called," the gentlemen who were filled with the Holy Ghost; we know that presidents of colleges, we know that kings, emperors, and executives of nations—we know that they mistook the blundering guesses of ignorant savages for the wisdom of an infinite God.

At last we know that the story of creation, of the beginning of things, as told in the "sacred book," is not only untrue, but infinitely absurd and idiotic. Now we know that the inspired writers did not know, and that the God who inspired them did not know.

We are no longer misled by myths and legends. We rely on facts. The world is our witness, and the stars testify for us.

What have the worldly done?

They have investigated the religions of the world, the sacred books, the prophecies, the commandments, the rules of conduct. They have studied the symbols, the ceremonies, the prayers, the sacrifices; and they have shown that all religions are substantially the same, produced by the same causes, and that all rest on a misconception of the facts in nature; that all are founded on ignorance and fear, on mistake and mystery.

We have found that Christianity is like the rest; that it was not revelation, but a natural growth; that its gods

and devils, its heavens and hells, were borrowed; that its ceremonies and sacraments were souvenirs of other religions, that no part of it came from heaven, but all was made by savage men. We have found that Jehovah was a tribal god; that his ancestors lived on the banks of the Euphrates, the Tigris, on the Ganges, and the Nile; that these ancestors could be traced back to still more savage forms.

We have found that all sacred books were filled with inspired mistakes, with sacred absurdities.

"Ah, but," says the Christian, "we have the only inspired book. We have the Old Testament and the New." Let me tell you something. Where did you get the Old Testament? From the Jews? Yes. Let me tell you about that.

After the Jews returned from Babylon, about 400 years before Christ, Ezra commenced making the Bible. We know that Genesis was written after the captivity—that is, a thousand years and more after Moses was dead—because it was from the Babylonians that the Jews got the story of the Creation, of Adam and Eve, of the Garden, of the serpent, of the tree of life, of the flood; and from the Babylonians they learned about the sacredness of the Sabbath. You find nothing about that holy day in Judges, in Joshua, in Samuel, in Kings, in Chronicles, nothing in Job, nothing in the Psalms, nothing in Esther, nothing in Solomon's Song, nothing in Ecclesiastes—only in books produced by Ezra after the return from Babylon. And when Ezra finished the inspired book he placed it in the holy temple. It was written on the skins of beasts, and there was only one copy.

What became of that Bible? Let me tell you.

Jerusalem was taken by Titus about seventy years after Christ. The temple was destroyed. At the request of Josephus the Holy Bible was sent by Titus to Vespasian, then the Emperor at Rome. And this Holy Bible has never since been seen or heard of, not once, not once. So much for that.

Then there was a copy, a translation rather, called the Septuagint. How was that made? It is said that Ptolemy Soter and his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, obtained a translation of the Jewish Bible. This was made by seventy persons, and at that time the Jewish Bible did not contain Daniel, nor Ecclesiastes, only a few of the Psalms, only a little of Isaiah.

What became of this translation? It was burned in the Bruchium Library forty-seven years before Christ. Never heard of again.

There was another so-called copy known as the Samaritan Roll of the Pentateuch. That happened to be a copy only of a part. It was never considered of value.

Have we a true copy of the Bible that was in the temple at Jerusalem? Nobody knows. Have we a true copy of the Septuagint? Nobody knows. Have we a genuine Bible? Nobody knows.

What is the oldest manuscript that we have of the Hebrew Bible? The oldest that we have was written in the tenth century after Christ, and the oldest we have of the Septuagint is written in Greek, and was written in the fifth century after Christ.

If the Bible was divinely inspired, if it was the word of God, we have no authenticated copy. The original has been lost, and we are left in the darkness of nature, to be misled by a pretended copy.

It is impossible for us to show that their Bible is correct. We have no standard. Many of the books of our Bible contradict each other. Many chapters appear to be incomplete and parts of different books. The nineteenth and twentieth chapters of 2 Kings and the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth chapters of Isaiah are exactly alike, word for word. Why did God inspire men to copy each other? So is the thirty-sixth chapter of Isaiah from the second verse precisely the same as the eighteenth chapter of 2 Kings from the second verse—absolutely, precisely, exactly the same.

It is perfectly apparent that there could have been no possible propriety in inspiring the writers of Kings and the writers of Chronicles; the books are substantially the same. The same is true of Leviticus and Numbers. So other books do not agree either in facts or philosophy. They differ as the men differed who wrote them.

What have the worldly done?

They have investigated the facts of nature. They have invented ways to use the forces of the world, the weight

of falling water, the forces of moving air. They have changed water to steam; they have invented engines—the tireless giants that work for man. They have made lighting a messenger and slave. They have invented movable type; taught us the art of printing; made it possible to save and transmit the intellectual wealth of the world. They connected continents with cables, cities and towns with the telegraph; they have brought the world into one family; they have made intelligence independent of distance. They taught us how to build homes, how to obtain food, how to weave cloth. They covered the seas with iron ships, the land with roads and steeds of steel. They gave us the tools of all trades—the implements of all labor. They chiselled statues, painted pictures, and “witched the world” with form and color. They have found the cause of, and the cure for, many maladies that afflict the flesh and minds of men. They have given us the instruments of music, and the great composers and performers have changed the common air to tones and harmonies that intoxicate, exalt, purify, and refine the soul.

They have rescued us from the prisons of fear; they have snatched our souls from the fangs and claws of superstition’s loathsome, crawling, flying beasts. They have given us the liberty to think, the courage to express our thoughts. They have changed the frightened, the enslaved, the kneeling, the prostrate into men and women—clothed them in their right minds and made them truly free. They have uncrowned the phantoms, wrested the sceptres from the ghosts, and given this world to the children of men. They have driven from our hearts the fiends of fear; they have extinguished the flames of hell.

They have read a few leaves of the great volume of Nature, deciphered some of the records written on stone by the tireless hands of time in the dim and distant past. They have told us something of what has been done by wind and wave, by fire and frost, by life and death, the ceaseless workers, the pauseless forces of the world.

They have enlarged the horizon of the known, changed the glittering specks that shine above us to wheeling worlds, and filled all space with constellations and countless suns.

They have found the qualities of substances, the nature of things. They have shown us how to analyze, separate, and combine, and have enabled us to use the good and avoid the hurtful.

They have given us mathematics in its higher forms, by means of which we measure astronomical spaces, the distances to stars, the velocity with which the heavenly bodies move, their density and weight, by which the mariner navigates wide and waste seas. They have given us all we have of knowledge, all we have of literature and art. They have made life worth living. They have filled the world with conveniences, with comforts, with luxuries.

And all this has been done by the worldly, by those who were not “called,” not “set apart,” not filled with the Holy Ghost, who had no claim to “apostolic succession.” The men who have accomplished these things had no revelation, no supernatural aid. They were not clad in sacred vestments; tiaras were not upon their heads. They were not even ordained. They used their senses; they observed and recorded facts. They had confidence in reason. They were patient searchers after the truth. They turned their attention to the affairs of this world. They were not saints. They were sensible men. They were not holy; they were honest. They worked for themselves; they worked for wife and child, and for the benefit of all.

To these men we are indebted for all we know, for all we have. They were the creators of civilization; they were the founders of free states; the saviors of liberty, the destroyers of superstition, the great captains in the sublime army of progress.

Whom shall we thank? Let us be honest; let us be generous.

Standing here at the close of the nineteenth century, amid the trophies of thought, the triumphs of genius, here under the flag of the Great Republic, knowing something of the history of man, here on this day that has been set apart for thanksgiving, here to-night I most reverently thank the good men, the good women of the past. I thank the kind fathers, the loving mothers of the savage days. I thank the father who spoke the first gentle word. I thank the first mother that smiled upon her babe, that clasped it to her breast and wept for joy. I thank the first true man. I thank the first true friend. I thank the first man

who would not tell a lie. I thank the savages who hunted and fished that they and their wives and babes might live. I thank those who cultivated the ground; those who changed the forests into farms. I thank those who built rude homes and watched the faces of their happy children in the glow of fireside flames.

I thank those who domesticated horses, cattle, and sheep; those who invented wheels and looms, and taught us to spin and weave; those who by cultivation changed wild grasses into corn and wheat, changed bitter things to fruit, and worthless weeds to flowers; that sowed within the heart of man the seeds of art. I thank the poets of the dawn, the tellers of legends, the makers of myths, the singers of joy and grief, of love and hope. I thank the artists who chiselled forms in stone, and wrought with light and shade the face of man. I thank the philosophers, the thinkers, who taught us how to use our minds in the great search for truth. I thank the astronomers who explored the heavens and told us the secrets of the stars, the glories of the constellations. I thank the geologists who found the story of the world in fossil forms, in memoranda kept in ancient rocks, in lines written by frost and fire, by wave and wind. I thank the anatomist who sought in muscle, nerve, and bone for all the mysteries of life. I thank the chemists who unravelled Nature’s work that they might learn her art. I thank the physicians who have laid the hand of science on the brow of pain, the hand whose magic touch restores. I thank the surgeons who have defeated Nature’s self and forced her to preserve the lives of those she labored to destroy. I thank the discoverers of chloroform and ether, the two angels who give to their beloved sleep, and wrap the throbbing nerves of pain in the soft robes of dreams.

I thank the great inventors, those who gave us movable type and the press, by means of which great thoughts and all discovered facts are made immortal. I thank the inventors of engines, of the great ships, of the railways, of the telegraphs and cables. I thank the great mechanics, the workers in iron and steel, in wood and stone. I thank the inventors, I thank the makers of numberless things of luxury and use.

I thank the industrious men. I thank the loving mothers, the useful women. I thank the benefactors of our race, and I say to-night the inventor of pins did a thousand times more good than all the popes and cardinals, and bishops, and priests, than all the clergymen, apostles, exhorters, and theologians that ever lived on the round earth.

I say to-night that the inventor of matches did more for the comfort and convenience of mankind than all the founders of religions, than all the makers of all creeds, than all malicious monks and selfish saints that ever lived.

I thank the honest men; I thank the honest women who have expressed their sincere thoughts, who have been true to themselves, and who have preserved the stainless veracity of their souls.

I thank the thinkers. I thank the thinkers of Greece and Rome. I thank Zeno and Epicurus; I thank Cicero and Lucretius. I thank Bruno, the bravest; I thank Spinoza, the subtlest of men.

I thank Voltaire, whose thought lighted a flame in the brain of man, unlocked the doors of superstition’s cells, and gave liberty to many millions of his fellow-men. Voltaire, a name that sheds light. Voltaire, a star that superstition’s darkness cannot quench.

I thank the great poets and dramatists. I thank Homer and Æschylus, and I thank Shakespeare above them all. I thank Burns for the heart-throbs he changed into songs; I thank him for his lyrics of flame. I thank Shelley for his *Skylark*; Keats for his *Grecian Urn*. I thank Byron for his *Prisoner of Chillon*. I thank the great novelists. I thank the great sculptors. I thank the unknown man who moulded and chiselled the Venus de Milo. I thank the great painters. I thank Rembrandt and Corot. I thank all who have adorned, enriched, and ennobled life—all who have created the heroic and the artistic ideals.

I thank the statesmen who have preserved the rights of man. I thank Paine, whose genius sowed the seeds of independence in the hearts of ’76. I thank Jefferson, whose mighty words for liberty have made the circuit of the globe. I thank the founders, the defenders, the saviors of the Republic. I thank Ericsson, the greatest mechanic of his century, for the *Monitor*. I thank Lincoln for the *Proclamation*. I thank Grant for his victories, and

the vast host that fought for the right, for the freedom of man. I thank them all; I thank the living and the dead.

I thank the great scientists, those who have reached the foundation, the bed-rock. I thank those who have built upon facts, the great scientists, in whose presence theologians look silly and look malicious.

Let me say to-night scientists never persecuted, never imprisoned their fellow-men. They forged no chains, built no dungeons, tore no flesh with red-hot pincers, dislocated no joints on racks, crushed no bones in iron boots, extinguished no eyes, tore out no tongues, lighted no fagots. They did not pretend to be inspired; did not claim to be prophets or saints; did not say they had been born again. They were intelligent. They did not appeal to force or fear. They did not regard men as slaves to be ruled by torture, by lash and chain, nor as children to be cheated with illusions, rocked in the cradle of an idiot creed, and soothed by a lullaby of lies.

They did not wound; they healed. They did not kill; they lengthened life. They did not enslave; they broke the chains and made men free. They sowed the seeds of knowledge, and many millions have reaped, are reaping, and will reap the great harvest of joy.

I thank Humboldt and Helmholtz. I thank Haeckel and Büchner. I thank Lamarck and Darwin—Darwin who revolutionized the thought of the intellectual world. I thank Huxley. I thank Spencer. I thank the scientists one and all.

I thank to-night the heroes, the destroyers of prejudice and fear; the dethroners of savage gods; the extinguishers of hate's eternal fire. I thank the heroes, the breakers of chains; the founders of free states; the makers of just laws. I thank the heroes who fought and fell on countless fields; the heroes whose dungeons became shrines; the heroes whose blood made scaffolds sacred. I thank the heroes, the apostles of reason, the disciples of truth, the soldiers of freedom. I thank the heroes who held high the holy torch and filled the world with light. With all my heart I thank them one and all.

ACID DROPS.

CHRISTIANS who give money for the conversion of the heathen should really turn their attention to the "heathen" at home. There is a scoundrelism in our great Christian cities that could not possibly be beaten in any part of the world. Look at the awful story of the death of Mrs. Caroline Adela Wingrove in Clerkenwell-road, London. Being addicted to drink, the poor woman wandered from her West-end home and was found at last on a dark staircase in a model dwelling-house. The man, or rather the thing, who found her took advantage of her helplessness and outraged her. Meeting some others afterwards, he recommended them to go and treat her as he had done. One of them did so, and as the poor woman had just enough sense left to bite her assailant, he bumped her head on the stones. Not satisfied with this, he returned and inflicted other dreadful injuries which proved fatal.

It is distracting to think of such a sordid tragedy. Yet it happened in a city where subscriptions are begged to proselytize the Hindus and Chinese, who would read this story with the same horror that we do.

A lad eight years of age was the chief witness against a man named Alfred Cox at the Old Bailey, and as the youngster did not understand the nature of an oath, the Common Serjeant adjourned the case in order that he might have three weeks' religious instruction. Meanwhile the accused was to be kept in prison—which is very nice treatment if he should turn out to be innocent. Perhaps it is good law, but it doesn't seem good sense. The boy's memory will not improve with the lapse of time, and his ability to tell the truth can hardly depend upon the stuff a parson crams him with.

Richard Archer Prince, the wretched fellow who killed William Terriss, has been found guilty of murder in fact, but as being insane enough to be irresponsible he is to be detained as a criminal lunatic at her Majesty's pleasure. It is one of the ironies of "Providence" that a vain, morbid, half-witted creature like this should slay such a fine fellow as Terriss. From the report of the trial it appears that Prince, like many another lunatic, is far from being irreligious. In his most excited moments he believed himself to be Jesus Christ, and the name of God was constantly on

his lips. Dr. H. C. Bastian, one of the medical witnesses as to his mental condition, said that he looked upon the murder of Terriss as an act of justice "brought about in some way through the intervention of the Almighty." Dr. T. B. Hislop, another specialist, said that "the prisoner regarded himself as being infallible, and as simply carrying out the will of God." This witness also said: "It is common for a person under such delusions to suppose he is Jesus Christ."

This particular delusion, that a man is infallible and is simply carrying out the will of God, used to be very common, especially among the clergy, who tortured, mutilated, and burnt their victims with the greatest cheerfulness. At one time the Christian Church had thousands of men like Prince, with just as much brains as he had, and just the same cocksureness that everybody who happened to cross their vanity and infallibility was a criminal who deserved the worst punishment. Happily, we have got these pests under, and now, instead of killing right and left with impunity, they are locked up in a lunatic asylum.

Another crank in something the same line as Prince, though not a criminal, is Mr. Tennyson Smith. This gentleman is a temperance reformer of a well-known intemperate type. A few days ago at Douglas he had a squabble with another pious reformer, Mrs. Ormiston Chant, who declined to work beside him and be in any way responsible for his utterances. Thereupon the great and noble Mr. Tennyson Smith declared that he was used to such repudiations, but his work survived "because God was behind it." That declaration is a sure sign. They all say it.

The Bishop of London is not very complimentary to the fools who find him £10,000 a year. Speaking as chairman, after a recent lecture by Sir Walter Besant, his lordship said: "If we took any of the chronicles, and went down below the surface, and saw what Englishmen had been doing, they were found to be just the same obstinate, stolid, stupid people as we found our neighbors to be who lived next door." This is true enough. The Bishop of London's big salary proves it. But is it politic to let the cat out of the bag in this fashion? His lordship forgets that stupid people like flattery, and expect it from their servants.

Dr. Cave discoursed to Congregational ministers at the Memorial Hall on "The Need of the Holy Spirit." When his sublime harangue was finished a minister rose to make a complaint. At the last meeting some brother-in-God had taken away his fine silk presentation umbrella, leaving a dreadfully shabby article in its stead. Two other ministers stated that they also had lost umbrellas, without even securing a shabby substitute. It looks therefore as though men of God were much like other folk in their ideas of *meum and tuum*.

Henry Snooks has been ordered in the London Sheriff's court to pay Ellen Day the sum of £100 for breach of promise. One of his "breaking-off" postcards informed her that he had made it "a matter of prayer." Snooks's uncle also prayed hard against the match. Both of them should now pray the Lord to settle the lady's bill.

There is a phenomenal pastor at Worthing called Crouch who runs a Tabernacle. For several years he has taken a salary, but he would rather not do so. Accordingly he has turned his talents to a business account, and the Lord has "so blessed him" that he is now able to give back the offerings of his people at the rate of £52 a year. By-and-by he hopes to preach without fee or reward. Meanwhile he has secured a good advertisement for the business, and perhaps if the Lord blesses it too much the preacher will get sick of the pulpit, or the less successful tradesmen sick of him.

At Greet, near Birmingham, the wife of a laborer named Mason left her baby in the cradle while she went out to buy something for dinner. Probably she thought that the baby was quite safe; and then there was the watchful eye of God above to make assurance doubly sure. But the eye of God winked badly, and a ferret got into the room. This animal was made by God just like the baby, but that did not prevent it from biting off the baby's left ear, upper lip, and eyebrows. A mad world, my masters! Especially when we are told of a Providence that superintends all the affairs of this planet.

A tornado in Arkansas destroyed a large part of Fort Smith City. Two churches were overthrown, and hundreds have been rendered homeless. Many fires broke out, and it is feared that fifty persons have perished. A dispatch from Batavia announces that the capital of Amboina, one of the Molucca Islands, has been completely destroyed by an earthquake. Fifty persons were killed and two hundred others injured. The plague in India is by means over; the returns from Bombay show 154 fresh cases and 167 deaths in forty-

eight hours. Many of the population are ever on the borders of famine. This is providential government.

Hundreds of settlers in Gippsland, Victoria, are homeless by great bush fires, which have reduced two townships to ashes. There has also been great loss of live stock. His tender mercies are over all his works.

Believers in omnibenevolence might consider the question which has been discussed by some naturalists in the *St. James's Gazette*. What is the natural cause of the death of animals—apart from those who die to serve as food for others? The natural cause is simply slow starvation. As an animal is weakened by age, or any other cause, it becomes unable to get food, and slowly starves. Every winter myriads of birds perish by starvation. Not a sparrow falls without our heavenly father's knowledge, but they fall all the same.

William Townes died while singing "Rock of Ages" in the Wesleyan chapel, Rosemary Place, Dalston. There is no "moral."

During the early weeks of December four Jewish women died in confinement in Jerusalem. Such deaths are of rare occurrence, and so the more fanatical Rabbis concluded that much sin was being committed in Jerusalem, and that consequently the sinners must be cast out. A boy, a driver by calling, who, on account of the bad roads and the rain, came into Jerusalem last Friday was the first victim of the excommunication. The boy had friends, and these placarded the walls of the city with a manifesto accusing the Rabbis of taking backsheesh. This attack has created a good deal of excitement.

They have been discussing in the *New York World* the question, "Can an Agnostic enter heaven?" The sky-pilots, who, of course, know all about it, have been asked their opinions. One says: "Unbelief merits eternal death." Another, that the Agnostic is a natural fool, who would not know heaven if he got there. Dr. Lyman Abbott, the pastor of Henry Ward Beecher's church, said: "I do not see why an Agnostic cannot enter the kingdom of heaven," and thereby excited the ire of his brethren in sky-pilotage. He now defends himself, and says: "I do not believe that Christ came into the world to afford escape from torment, or to get us into a place of bliss. There is more faith in Christ in the Agnostic, who spends his life in the service of humanity, than in Torquemada of the Spanish Inquisition—more appreciation of the spirit of Christ." It is, however, the unbelievers who have caused this conviction. To our mind, Torquemada was a far truer Christian than Dr. Lyman Abbott.

The age-enduring quarrel between Jesuits and Benedictines still flourishes, and in England, as is witnessed by a violent onslaught by Father Thurston, S.J., on Father Taunton, for making some reflections on the Jesuit martyr, or traitor, Persons or Parsons.

A noteworthy paper on "Civil Penalties for Religious Offences" was read before the Catholic Historical Research Society by Mgr. J. S. Vaughan; his relative, the Cardinal Archbishop, presiding. Mgr. Vaughan pointed out that, in the Old Testament, death was prescribed for blasphemy, and even for breaking the Sabbath. The early Christians enacted punishments for spiritual offences. "An immoral act was punished in the old law because it was immoral; the law of the present day took no cognisance of it, if it did not violate the liberty of another." The lecturer compared the barbarity of Protestant persecution with "the mildness of the Inquisition." In conclusion he said: "In former times men judged and punished evil because it was evil. To-day they felt themselves incompetent to deal with evil for its own sake." Apparently, Mgr. Vaughan regrets this incompetence, and possibly he would like to restore the good old times, though he did not venture to say so.

The Secret Society of the Holy Cross, of which the Rev. C. R. Chase, of Plymouth, is Master, is one of the most thorough-going of the Romanizing bodies which finds their recruiting ground in the English Church Union. It has a special roll of celibates, and all are pledged to the restoration of masses, prayers for the dead, confession, penance, and the seven sacraments, including the Real Presence. It seems that the *Priest in Absolution* is still in circulation. One bishop is a member of this secret society. But it is only the Bishop of Zanzibar.

It has been asserted that most of the members of this society, and also of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, are secretly ordained under Roman orders, having doubts as to the validity of Anglican orders.

Roman Catholic dignitaries are noted for their nephews and nieces. Canon Decaine, of Montreal, however, takes the cake with 142. When the Pope heard of it from Arch-

bishop Paul Bruchise, he exclaimed: "What, 142! Then gather them altogether when you return, and pour the papal blessing upon them."

Truth, which has often called attention to the cruelty to animals in Italy, cites a correspondent who points out that the blame for the prevailing state of things really rests upon the priests, who are not only utterly callous in regard to the sufferings of animals, but expressly teach that "animals are not Christians," and have no claim on Christian sympathy or charity. It is owing to this religious teaching that all attempts to check cruelty to animals in Southern Italy have been so futile, and the correspondent contends that the law, however stringent it might be, must be absolutely powerless to protect animals until the attitude of the priests is changed.

The Rev. A. R. W. Seton made an application in the Bankruptcy Court for his discharge, but the Official Receiver reported that the debtor had contributed to his bankruptcy by extravagance and rash speculation, and his discharge was suspended for two years.

Religious people are apt to be very fussy in their morality. It is not enough to be sober and honest themselves—even if they happen to be so. They have too often an itch for supervising the virtue of their neighbors. An illustration of this has just occurred in the parish of Llanbister, among the hills of Radnorshire, in South Wales. A "Rebecca" gang fetched out a man and woman whose perfection was suspected, stripped them nearly naked late at night, and compelled them to walk backwards and forwards for nearly twenty minutes in the river. Then they were chased up and down the fields, and labored with straps and sticks. Finally, they were escorted back to the man's house, where they were "tried" and condemned to further flogging. Their hair was cut off, and they suffered other indignities. No doubt the brutal moralists who inflicted these inhumanities are very good Christians, and when in church talk of nothing but "love, love, love."

Austria is a most Christian empire. But it does not allow its subjects to follow their own notions of Christianity. A young conscript has been sentenced to five years' penal servitude for refusing to shoulder arms and drill. Christianity, he declared, forbade the use of deadly weapons.

The Peace Society has issued a leaflet, entitled "Britain in North-west India," dealing with the moral question of our war with the tribes. Reference is made to the destruction of villages and all that was in them, even to the mill-stones, showing that we are more ruthless even than former savage conquerors, who spared the fruit trees of the land they devastated. Says the writer: "This fiendish operation is described as 'a useful day's work,' an operation which caused the wanton destruction of human lives, aged and infirm people being roasted to death, and in which 'many a new-born babe died.' It is horrible to contemplate."

The Kaffirs are learning the blessings of Christianity. The *Transvaal Sentinel* reports that two of them disputed in Pretoria about the meaning of certain Biblical passages and came to blows. One was stabbed in the back, and the other cleared.

In the miserable exposure of the financial operations of Sir Tatton and Lady Sykes it transpired that the baronet's chief interests were the breeding of bloodstock and attendance at race-meetings. Lady Sykes said he had a great objection to giving money for anything except churches. Sport and churches are two things which the privileged easily see help to keep the masses content with their position.

It seems that the three sons of the late wealthy pickle and provision merchant, Mr. J. T. Norton, who left nearly half a million to religious societies, a quarter of a million going to the Moravians, are going to dispute his will. By the terms of the will, his sons were required to buy the business at a valuation, and the sum left them was quite insufficient for the purpose.

In the case of William Palmer, accused of indecently assaulting a girl of eleven years of age in a South-Western Railway carriage, his counsel pleaded that the prisoner was suffering from religious mania. Another instance of a not unusual combination.

Here is an advertisement taken from the columns of the *Christian*. It is too rich for comment: "Wanted, a handy man, single, between twenty and thirty, in a house as an extra. Willing to turn his hand to anything, or willing to learn. Anyone who knows anything of one or more of the following accomplishments may apply: Typewriting, short-hand, carpentering, cooking, porter's work, waiting at table, bookkeeping, keeping of accounts, letter-writing, photo-

graphy. The knowledge of shorthand and good accountant essential. Eight shillings a week, board, lodging, and washing offered. Anyone accustomed to Evangelistic work, a Christian, and an abstainer appreciated. Must be energetic and clever. An ex-soldier preferred. A. B., Haddon's Offices, Salisbury-square, E.C."

At a meeting of the Society for the Study of Inebriety at the rooms of the Medical Society of London, an address was delivered by Dr. William L. Brown, who incidentally alluded to his experience of the Sunday Closing Acts. Mentioning one district in Ayrshire, Dr. Brown said he had sometimes seen as many as sixty churchgoers, who had travelled four miles, sitting in one room of a public-house drinking together on Sunday, and waiting for the church bells to ring at service time.—*Daily News*.

A sanitary Bible for the use of court rooms has just been put on the market. It is bound with white celluloid instead of leather, and it can, therefore, be washed and disinfected from time to time.

The Rev. E. W. Pochin, of Berkeley, Leicester, laid up considerable treasure upon earth, and has left some £80,000 to the British and Foreign Bible Society to circulate the scriptures which forbid that practice.

Joan of Arc, after being burnt as a witch and a heretic, is on the fair way to canonization as a Roman saint, having now only to pass the objections of the Devil's Advocate. We can give that functionary a tip. The late M. Octave Delepierre, one of the most learned of Belgian antiquaries, and a founder of the Philobiblion Society, published a work in which he contended that the genuine Maid of Orleans was not burnt at all, but married and had a family.

Schiller's bell, at Schaffhausen, which suggested the famous "Song of the Bell," was said to be doomed to be melted down. It will, however, be preserved in a museum. Upon the bell is the inscription: "*Vivos voco, mortuos plango, fulgura frango*" ("I call the living, I mourn the dead, I break the thunderbolt"). It illustrates an old superstition that bells drove away evil spirits—a superstition probably founded upon noises being found to scare wild beasts.

Durandus, the old writer on Christian ritual, says: "The church, when a tempest is seen to arise, rings the bells that the fiends, hearing the trumpets of the Eternal King, may flee away and cease from raising the storm." Among old inscriptions on bells are found such as these: "I drive away pestilence"; "I am called Mary: I disperse the storms, scatter enemies, and drive away demons." Similar superstitions are found among Buddhists, from whom, probably, the bells of Christian churches are derived.

At the anniversary of the birthday of the Sultan of Turkey, celebrated at the Liverpool Mosque, Sheik Quilliam said it would be welcome news to the Sultan to know that, upon the day of the anniversary of his birth, no fewer than eight persons in Liverpool had accepted Islam and joined the ranks of the true believers. It may be doubted if as many Moslems have been turned to Christianity throughout all the East.

Christian converts, when made, are always from savage devil-worshippers, or those steeped in gross forms of idolatry. Christianity fails when brought into contact with the higher faiths, like Islam and Judaism. This indicates its real position among the world's religions.

In the Autobiography of Joseph Arch it is told how Dr. Elliott, Bishop of Gloucester is reported to have said with reference to Mr. Arch and his associates: "There is an old saying, 'Don't nail their ears to the pump, and don't duck them in a horse pond'—a hint which Mr. Arch stigmatizes as a direct incentive to riot.

Another instance of assumption is thus related by Mr. Arch: "In our village we had a most despot parson's wife, a kind of would-be lady pope, and one day she took it into her head to issue a decree. She gave out that all the girls attending school were to have their hair cut round like a basin, more like prison girls than anything else. My mother put her foot down, and said she never would allow her daughters to have their hair cut in such an unsightly way. When she heard this, the parson's wife became very nasty; and she could be uncommonly nasty when she chose. She proceeded to make things very uncomfortable for my mother; but she had met her match, and more, in the agricultural laborer's wife. My mother fought it out inch by inch, and, though she had a tough fight of it, she won in the end. But the parson's wife never forgave her for it."

Sir Henry Brackenbury told the Geographical Society how the Baluchis speak of their fatherland. They say

that the Almighty, when making the world, used all the water and grass and flowers and trees to make other beautiful countries, and when He had used all these and had nothing left but a heap of rubbish, He threw that down and made Baluchistan. Sir Henry Brackenbury had heard others comment upon that and say: "We cannot understand, when He had made Baluchistan, that he took the trouble to make any other hell."

Mark Twain is recommended by a correspondent of the *Methodist Times* as one of the writers to be read by local preachers. We sincerely hope the advice will be taken extensively. A steady course of Mark Twain is an excellent preparation for the higher rationalism. Anyhow, it is calculated to broaden the face and soften the humors of the average Methodist preacher, whether he be local like Balaam's quadruped or cosmopolitan like Satan. Here's success to Mark Twain among the Methodists!

A number of funerals take place at Grays, in Essex, without the aid of a minister, the undertaker reading a burial service. This is much disliked by the professional Nonconformists, who have appealed to the Urban District Council to "do something" to prevent undertakers from poaching upon clerical preserves. The Council, however, declined to appoint a minister, or to make any sort of arrangement. People could conduct funerals as they liked in the unconsecrated part of the cemetery, and it was legal for anyone to officiate at the grave in a seemly fashion.

Juvenile blunders still accumulate, in spite of "definite and dogmatic teaching." Here is the latest, given as a fact, from the *Church Review*:—"Priest (catechizing)—'Now, children, what is the meaning of those letters you see on the altar frontal—I.H.S.?' Little Girl—'Please, sir, I know—'I'ate Satan.'"

It seems that Munkacsy's picture, "Ecce Homo," has been the cause of an incurable mental breakdown. Under the strain of the work the great Hungarian artist neglected the ordinary rules of health. He had no regular meals, and almost lived in the studio. It may be doubted if the picture, or its subject, is worth the price paid for it.

The S.P.C.K. issues "Simple Rules for Approach to Holy Communion," which finds place in the *Lincoln Church Magazine*. Among the items are: If you wear gloves, take them off before you come up to communicate. Always take the Chalice in both hands, so as to avoid any risk of letting it fall; and, for a similar reason, it is well to follow the very ancient custom of receiving the Consecrated Bread in the palm of the right hand. It is our bounden duty to show the utmost reverence and care in receiving this, of which the Bible tells us that it is the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Cor. x. 16). Communicants are advised not to hurry from church after partaking of the Body and Blood. Doubtless it is well to give it time to digest.

The Eskimos have but a very short season for walrus-hunting, and the walrus to them is what the potato is to the Irish cottier. Yet the men of God have sufficient influence to prevent them pursuing their avocation on Sunday. Even the *Christian World* says: "One can but question the wisdom of the Sabbatism which, under such conditions of life, imposes so inflexible a rule."

The Rev. C. Wainwright, vicar of Christ Church, Blackpool, speaking in connection with a series of services for men only, said the title for "men only" had created the greatest curiosity, and the first person to attend at the mission hall was a woman. When refused admittance, she pleaded hard, and said she would go into the gallery where nobody could see her. She was told to go away, as her turn would come next. We wonder the man is not ashamed of discourses which he has to address to the sexes separately, to gain the stimulus of curiosity.

The American clergy have another attack of Ingersoll on the brain. The Rev. J. Henry says that Ingersoll is a moral monomaniac. He is a mental giant, generous-hearted and happy, but still "a madman." Well, well! What a pity it is that this minister hasn't a tenth part of Ingersoll's complaint! Dr. Talmage says that "to discuss whether Ingersoll is insane or not is the acme of insanity." He describes Ingersoll as "one man of ten millions," and "one of the greatest, if not the greatest orator of this generation." Still, Talmage looks forward to Ingersoll's conversion, and expects D. L. Moody to do the miracle. Meanwhile the great Freethought orator is lecturing to thousands of eager listeners and making them laugh at the clergy. Yes, Moody had better look sharp with that miracle.

It is with our judgments as our watches; none go just alike, yet each believes his own.—*Pope*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 23, Secular Hall, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell-road, S.E.; at 7.30, "The Way to Heaven."
January 30, Athenæum Hall.
February 6, Athenæum Hall; 20, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—January 30, Birmingham; 25 and 26, debate at Birmingham; 31 and February 1, 2, and 3, Derby; 6, Sheffield; 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.
- T. ROBERTSON (Glasgow).—Thanks for your letter. We are delighted to hear that an anonymous donor has sent your Branch ten pounds. As you say, it is both a help and an encouragement. Mr. Foote writes you personally on the subject of his approaching visit.
- C. LLOYD (ENGSTROM).—Of course there is no need to pursue the controversy if you feel you have stated your own position clearly. You need not thank us for allowing your letter to appear. We are always ready to insert courteous and well-written replies to *Freethinker* articles. Mr. Watts has not done anything exceptional either in answering you in a "gentlemanly way." We reciprocate your good wishes.
- C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for the marked copies of *Lucifer*. The reference to Mr. Foote does not call for special notice, and others referred to must (and doubtless can) take care of themselves. With regard to "the coming fight"—which never quite arrives—we venture to doubt whether writers who conceal their real names in time of peace will be found in the van of the battle when war breaks out.
- W. E. MANTON wants to know the address of any newsagent in Warrington or Widnes from whom he can obtain the *Freethinker*. Can any reader oblige him with it?
- JOHN GILHAM.—The subject requires fuller and more detailed treatment.
- R. S. JOHNSON.—Pleased to hear that Mr. W. Garley has been elected to the Northampton School Board, as we presume he stands for secular education. The local political dispute is not one in which we have any editorial interest.
- E. J.—The young gentleman is mistaken. Mr. Foote has written nothing on Mr. Platt's writings, either in the *Freethinker* or elsewhere. Mr. Wheeler has written upon them in our columns over his own signature.
- S. BURTON.—Thanks for your good wishes, and your further five shillings towards the Treasurer's Scheme; also for your promise of five shillings per quarter. The design argument is too large to be dealt with in this column. The evolution of sex began in the vegetable world. Pleased to hear you so enjoyed Mr. Foote's lectures at Liverpool.
- H. GARCKE.—We are obliged to you for the enclosure. See "Acid Drops."
- R. S. P.—Many thanks for cuttings. Your courtesy is highly appreciated.
- A. GUEST desires to notify his change of address to 23 Framfield-road, Highbury.
- J. W. DRAPER.—Thanks for New York *Sun*. We are always glad to see American papers with items of interest.
- N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Subscriptions paid at Annual Dinner:—H. T. S., £2; R. McKirdy, £1 1s.; W. Hawker, £1 1s.; E. Wilson, 10s.; H. J. Strong, 4s.; W. J. Casey, 5s.; Mrs. Victor Roger, 2s. 6d.; C. H. Sesemann, 5s.; M. Striomer, 10s. 6d.; Mrs. Striomer, 10s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*:—R. A. and J. Radford, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Cross, 5s.; W. Robinson, 5s.; James Leipper, 10s.; J. Fulton, £3 15s. Promises:—B. L. Coleman, £1. *Per C. Watts*:—Frank Nelson, 10s.
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Collection by Birmingham Branch, £2 2s.; and a useful parcel from A. J. Marriott.
- G. W. BLYTHE.—The fact that you use opium does not alter our ill opinion of a Christian power that forces the opium traffic upon China in spite of the protests of her statesmen. China has the right to regulate her own affairs, just as we have.
- F. COTTRELL.—Sorry to hear that Mr. Forder was too unwell to keep his engagement at Camberwell on Sunday evening. We note your hope that he will soon be all right and able to give you a lecture at an early date. It was well that Mr. Victor Roger, Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, Mr. Herbert, Mr. Corrie, and Mr. Cooke were present and capable of entertaining the audience.
- ESS JAY BEE.—Shall appear. Thanks.
- FRANCIS NEALE.—Always much pleased to hear from you. Your valued article will appear next week.
- R. JOHNSON (Manchester), sending us £1 towards the Treasurer's Scheme, hopes the promised subscriptions are coming in satisfactorily, and says the Scheme must be a great success if every *Freethinker* will only send what he can easily spare.
- J. TALLMAN (Grimsby).—You are evidently inspired, but, like other inspired persons, you are somewhat lacking in common sense.
- O. DREWELL.—In our next.
- THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

S. ROUSE.—Lecture notices must be written on separate slips of paper for the printer. We cannot undertake to copy them out from letters on other matters. See paragraph in "Sugar Plums." Mr. Foote hopes to visit Paisley after lecturing at Glasgow.

R. P. EDWARDS, 2 Fernhead-road, Harrow-road, W., will be glad to hear from any Chelsea *Freethinkers* willing to take part in organizing Secular propaganda in that district. It is proposed to start meetings in the Co-operative Hall.

G. PALMER.—We thank you for calling our attention to the fact that a joke we printed last week appeared in the *Freethinker* six weeks ago. These little mishaps will occur occasionally. A man may slip once on a piece of orange peel without being afflicted with chronic staggers. We regret we cannot put our hands on the Mary Magdalene letter you refer to. Anyhow, there is nothing but orthodox assumption in support of her being a bad character.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Lincoln Church Magazine—Free Society—Adult—Christian Age—Two Worlds—Lucifer—Sydney Bulletin—South Wales Daily News—Newcastle Chronicle—De Dageraad—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker—Portsmouth News—Universal Brotherhood—Isle of Man Times—Torch of Reason—Liberator—Castleford Express—Hull News.

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE pays another visit to the Camberwell Secular Hall this evening (January 23), taking for the subject of his lecture "The Way to Heaven." No doubt there will be a strong rally of South London friends on this occasion. It would be well, too, if they could bring some of their more orthodox friends along with them.

Mr. Foote paid a highly successful visit to Liverpool on Sunday. His morning audience was a record one, being the largest seen in the Oddfellows' Hall for many years. In the afternoon the formidable rivalry of the Sunday Society had to be faced, with its two large halls in full swing not a quarter of a mile away. Still there was a good meeting, though not quite so good as the morning's. In the evening the hall was crowded with a most appreciative and enthusiastic audience. Mr. Hammond, who was in the chair, expressed a hope that some of those who had so warmly applauded the President of the National Secular Society's lecture would lose no time in enrolling themselves as members of the Liverpool Branch.

Secularism in Liverpool seems to have taken a turn for the better. The N.S.S. Branch is making good progress in its new quarters at the Alexandra Hall. Its regular Sunday meetings are well attended, and there is generally some profitable discussion. The hall itself is comfortable and well situated. In connection with it there is a larger hall available for special lectures, and quite capable of accommodating most audiences but those of Mr. Foote. We are glad to see the Liverpool Branch settling down to a policy of hard work. It always tells in the long run. Branches that put head and heart into the business, and labor harmoniously, are sure to succeed.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road. The audience evidently much appreciated his new lecture, "Morality versus Superstition." The applause was frequent and hearty. Mr. Harry Brown presided in an efficient manner. There was no discussion.

To-day, Sunday, January 23, Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening in Birmingham, where he also debates next Wednesday and Thursday, January 26 and 27.

Mr. A. B. Moss visited Birmingham last Sunday, and met with a very hearty reception. We are informed that Mr. Moss was in good form, and that the evening lecture was frequently applauded by the large audiences assembled at the Bristol-street schools. Mr. Moss prefaced his lecture by a Dramatic Recital.

Mr. Cohen had good meetings on Sunday at Chester. There was less opposition, but the audiences were larger and more appreciative. Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (January 23) at Sheffield, on Monday at Woodhouse, and on Wednesday at Carlton—the week-night lectures being under the Treasurer's Scheme.

The Annual Conversazione of the Glasgow Branch was very successful. A goodly company spent a most enjoyable evening. The Branch has an excellent syllabus of Sunday lectures for the new year.

The Paisley Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday. The report showed an increase in members and income. Mr. David Watt was elected president, and Mr. J. Garvin vice-president. The secretary and treasurer were re-elected.

The Athenæum Hall will be used this evening by the Finsbury Branch for a social gathering, the tickets being one shilling each. A good program of music has been arranged, and there will be a dance for the light-footed. The N. S. S. President has promised to hurry back from Camberwell to give a reading before the party breaks up.

Sunday, January 30, is the anniversary of Charles Bradlaugh's death, and Mr. Foote will deliver a memorial address in the evening at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London. London Freethinkers should make a special note of this occasion.

The first Annual Business Meeting of the Moral Instruction League will be held at St. Martin's Town Hall on Wednesday, January 26, at 8 p.m. A printed constitution has been submitted to members, the adoption of which, and the election of officers and committee, will be the main business of the meeting.

Members of the National Secular Society can, of course, join the Moral Instruction League individually if they please. We do not wish to prevent them from doing so. Only it is not necessary, as they will be represented *en bloc* by N.S.S. delegates under Article IV. of the League's constitution.

The *Hull Daily Mail* has permitted a discussion of the question, "Are Christianity and Morality Independent of Each Other?" in which the Freethought view has been well sustained by "Esau Reason."

There is something magnificent in the courage with which Zola stands up for what he regards as justice in the Dreyfus case, against the whole French government, and nearly the whole French nation. This man is a Materialist, an Atheist; yet he stakes his popularity, his income, and his liberty in the effort to bring his countrymen back to common sense and common honesty. Well may the *Daily News* say that he may be mistaken, but "he is certainly the bravest man in France." Curiously enough, the deputy who called upon the government to act, in response to Zola's terrible letter, is Count de Mun, the leader of the Christian Socialists. This fact should be remembered. The Atheist stands for justice against all odds; the Christian Socialist demands his suppression.

Fria Tankar, the organ of the Swedish Freethinkers, edited by Karl Ellington, published at 21 Hollandaregatan, Stockholm, has in its number for January a capital portrait of Colonel Ingersoll, reproduced from a steel plate. The editor, who is to be congratulated on the *verve* with which he maintains the paper, gives a biography of the Colonel.

The late Henry Morehouse Taber, author of *Faith and Fact*, and formerly treasurer of the first Presbyterian Church in New York, left directions by his will that he should be cremated without religious service. Professor Felix Adler, of the Ethical Culture Society, delivered an address at the house, which was purely secular in character.

Out of a multiplicity of charges brought against Colonel Ingersoll by the clergy, there appears to be but one that can be made to stick. It does seem to be true that large numbers of people go to hear him, and pay for the privilege, which is, of course, the Colonel's fault. There is not a minister in the country who can be proved guilty of drawing such crowds at from fifty cents to a dollar per head.—*Truthseeker*.

Mr. Joseph Symes, who is now lecturing at a new Free-thought hall, Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Melbourne, says in the *Liberator*: "What a change has come over the churches since my landing in Melbourne in 1884! Then they were pretty orthodox, and their Sunday theatricals were conducted with what was considered godly decorum. Now they are all on the loose; they resort to pleasant Sunday afternoons, to secular songs and music, laymen assist at the plays, and whole slices and junks of 'the wicked world' have been transferred to the temples. To be sure, they profess to be as orthodox as ever, and as particular about 'divine worship' as ever; but look at their practices. Imagine what the saints of our boyhood would say, could they resurrect and witness what the churches are doing at the present day!"

The Rev. J. P. Bannin, of the Italian (Catholic) Church, Clerkenwell-road, sends us a long reply to Mr. Wheeler's article on "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil," in which the reverend gentleman is referred to. It is too late for insertion in this week's *Freethinker*, but will appear in our next issue.

THE NAUGHTY NEWSPAPERS.

"COME, Jake! It's almost meetin' time;
Thrown down that paper streaked with red,
Filled full of filth and vice and crime—
Them papers is a raisin' Ned!
Ef you would read yer Bible more,
Ye'd mebbey reap the blest reward
Of that ole saint I named ye for—
The good old prophet of the Lord!"

"Yes, pa! be gosh! There is some queer
An' crooked things gits into print!
Las' night I seen a paper here
That hed high-flavored stories in't."
"What was they, Jakey? Might es well
Go on an' say, now you've begun;
It ain't no special harm to tell,
But papers shouldn't publish one."

"Wal, pa, a laborin' man, it said,
Hired to a farmer, way down East,
An' rounded up his stock, and fed
Sheep, cows, and every kind of beast,
And toiled along for several year
Fer jest his board, until one day
He quit, and told his boss, 'See here!
I guess it's time I hed some pay.'"

"The old man answered: 'Times is hard!
Mutton's a drug and money scarce.
Don't ask fer cash fer yer reward,
Fer that would drain my poor old purse.
My oldest darter hes sore eyes,
But tother's perty, folks declare—
Two lively bits of merchandise—
Take both the girls and call it square!"

"Both on 'em Jake, at onct? Two wives!"
"Yes, pa, the paper gives their names—
He took 'em; they lived pious lives;
He'd lots of children—so it claims.
And, pa, what gen'rous souls was theirs!
That he might be a fruitful limb,
They called two servant-girls upstairs,
And made both on 'em marry him!"

"Four wives at onct? The horrid wretch!
He went an' married all the four?
Now, Jake, I wish you wouldn't fetch
Such wicked papers here no more."
An' then he robbed his father-in-law—
Stole all his stock, the paper says—
Took all the cows an' sheep he saw,
An' lighted out between two days!"

"Wal, Jakey! Did they catch the thief
And chuck him in the county jail?"
"No, pa; he never come to grief—
His projects didn't seem to fail;
And when he went to fetch the cows
God met him, and remarked: 'My friend,
You've acted square and kep' your vow—
I'll stand right by you to the end!'"

"Pshaw, Jake! A likely yarn indeed!
What paper lies at sech a rate?"
"W'y, pa, the one you always read—
The Meth'dis Christian Advocate!"
"The Meth—" "Yes, pa, and you've abhorred
The patriarch that you adore—
That good ole prophet of the Lord—
The gentleman you named me for!"

"Jacob! This here is Atheist talk!
Foolin' your father! Think it's wit?
Out of my house this day you walk
Fer makin' fun of Holy Writ.
I'll cut you off without a cent!
Git out! Pack up your duds an' post
My son! my son! He's ben an' went
And sinned against the Holy Ghost!"

—W. A. Crofut.

There is no error fraught with so many evils as that of founding morals upon mysteries and doctrines rather than upon the real nature of man.—*Morgan's Letter to the Bishop of London*.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

XX.—THE CRUCIFIXION (*Concluded*).

THE Gospel story of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Christ has been shown to be nothing less than pure fiction. Also, the origin of the story is quite as obvious as its fictitious character. It was fabricated simply in order to show that Christ was the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament, and that all the circumstances connected with his death occurred in fulfilment of prophecy.

This pious work appears to have commenced as early as Paul's time; for that great teacher, though he knew nothing of the present Gospel narratives, says (1 Cor. xv. 3-4):—

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures."

Thus, everything happened "according to the scriptures"—that is, the Old Testament writings—and the early Christians, who knew nothing of any events in the life of Christ, discovered them by studying those scriptures.

First, as regards the mocking and scourging. Upon this subject Jesus is represented as saying to his disciples (Luke xviii. 31-33):—

"Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man. For he shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully entreated, and spit upon; and they shall scourge and kill him."

There is nothing whatever written concerning Christ in "the prophets," consequently the words here put in the mouth of that personage are untrue. The principal passage to which reference is made is the following:—

"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah l. 6).

This is what the Old Testament writer states had happened to himself, and is, of course, not a prediction at all. But the early Christians and Gospel-makers interpreted the passage as a prophecy relating to Christ, and not only made that alleged miracle-worker refer to it, but represented it as actually fulfilled at the trial and crucifixion of their Lord. This accounts for the conflicting statements in the Gospels respecting the mocking and spitting.

Again, Jesus is represented as saying to his apostles (Luke xxii. 37):—

"For I say unto you, that *this* which is written must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with transgressors': for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment."

The quotation is from Isaiah liii., the whole of which chapter was regarded by the early Christians as written concerning Christ. There can be little doubt that the two thieves who are said to have been crucified with Jesus were introduced to fulfil this so-called prophecy. They were the "transgressors." Similarly, the following passages in the same chapter suggested materials for the Gospel narratives:—

liii. 7. "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea, he opened not his mouth."

liii. 9. "And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death."

liii. 12. "And he made intercession for the transgressors."

It was in order to fulfil the first of these passages that Jesus, when accused at the trial, "held his peace" and "answered nothing"—"not even to one word" (Matt. xxvii. 63; xxvii. 12, 14); also, in Acts viii. 32-35 the words are expressly stated to be a prediction relative to Christ. In order to fulfil the second of these passages the Gospel-makers introduce "a rich man, from Arimathea, named Joseph," who places the body in "his own new tomb" (Matt. xxvii. 57, 60, etc.). To fulfil the third passage Christ is represented as saying: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). It is scarcely necessary to say that the chapter, Isaiah liii., contains no predictions whatever.

In the Third Gospel Jesus, after his alleged resurrection,

is represented as saying to his disciples: "All things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me" (xxiv. 44, 45). Then, it is said, "he opened their mind that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day" etc. Here Jesus (if we take the narrative to be historical) is shown to be either a man destitute of the smallest particle of reason, or an unscrupulous misrepresenter of facts. There is not a single word in "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" which can be truthfully said to have been written concerning Christ, and in none of the writings named is it predicted that *anyone* should "rise again from the dead the third day." I challenge any Christian reader to point to a single passage in the Old Testament that has any reference to Christ.

The mention of the Psalms brings us to a document which suggested to the Gospel-makers several of the events which they record. This is Psalm xxii., which was regarded by the early Christians, without exception, as a prediction referring to Christ; consequently everything therein stated had to be fulfilled, and was of course so represented.

Verse 16 comes first—"They pierced my hands and my feet." This being predicted of Jesus, that personage was of course crucified. Death by stoning or decapitation would not have fulfilled the "prophecy"; Christ was therefore nailed to a cross.

Verses 7 and 8 suggested the mocking when on the cross: "All that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him." After reading this statement (which is not a prediction) it is not surprising to find Matthew saying (xxvii. 30, 43):—

"And they that passeth by railed on him, wagging their heads and saying,....He trusted on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him."

Verse 18 reads: "They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots." This being predicted, it is satisfactory to find that all three Synoptists say: "They parted his garments among them, casting lots." The author of the Fourth Gospel, however, misunderstood the passage, and, in making it fulfilled, convicts himself of fraud. The two sentences—"They part my garments among them; upon my vesture do they cast lots"—are an example of one of the most striking peculiarities of Hebrew poetry—synonymous parallelism. This consists of two sentences which express the same ideas in different, but nearly equivalent, terms. The following are short examples:—

Psalm xiv. 7. "Then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."

Psalm xlix. 1. "Hear this, all ye peoples: give ear, all ye inhabitants of the earth."

Psalm cxiv. 4. "The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like young sheep."

In each of the foregoing examples there is but one statement, which is repeated in a slightly altered form; "Israel shall be glad" is but a repetition of "Jacob shall rejoice." So, also, in the two sentences under consideration: "Upon my vesture do they cast lots" is but a repetition in a varied form of "They part my garments among them"—the "vesture" being but another name for the "garments," and the parting or division being made by casting lots. The Fourth evangelist, however, took the "vesture" to be distinct from the "garments," and the "parting" and "casting lots" to be two separate acts. In accordance with this erroneous view, this veracious writer says (xix. 23, 24):—

"The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said, therefore, one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: *that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith: 'They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.'* These things, therefore, the soldiers did."

We may safely say that "these things, therefore, the soldier did" *not* do. According to this ingenious fabrication, Jesus had four garments and a vesture, though in Palestine, in his days, a complete suit comprised but two

garments—an under and an outer one. Also, four soldiers only were present at the crucifixion, in order that each one might receive a garment; further, the tunic was “woven and without seam,” so that it could not be cut. A more transparent fraud can scarcely be imagined. But, to render the deception practised still clearer, the words in this psalm are employed in a figurative sense. The writer, who represents himself as in great distress and surrounded by enemies, calls himself a “worm” and a “reproach,” and says that “dogs” have compassed him about, and “strong bulls” have beset him; these have pierced his hands and his feet, and have divided his garments among them. This language, as will be seen, is metaphorical; but the Gospel-writers have, all four, construed it literally, though only one of them has misread the garments-and-vesture passage. To make the misrepresentation more complete, the psalm is not a prediction at all; the writer merely states, in a figurative manner, that he is harassed by powerful foes, and, all through, he speaks only of himself.

Another well-known passage in the Psalms, which suggested matter for the crucifixion story, is the following (lxix. 21):—

“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

This, like the rest, is figurative language; but the Gospel-makers understood it literally, and therefore represented the Jews as giving the articles mentioned to Jesus. Thus, Matthew says (xxvii. 34, 48):—

“They gave him wine to drink mingled with *gall*..... and one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with *vinegar*.....and gave him to drink.”

The author of the Fourth Gospel makes Jesus say “I thirst” in order that they might give him the vinegar, and “that the scripture might be accomplished” (xix. 28); consequently, “when Jesus therefore had received the *vinegar*, he said, It is finished”—that is, everything predicted was then fulfilled. In the Gospel of Peter the gall-and-vinegar passage is referred to more plainly. The writer of that narrative states:—

“And one of them said: ‘Give him gall and vinegar to drink’; and they mixed it, and gave him to drink. And they *fulfilled everything*, and consummated the sins on their own heads.”

Here it is plainly implied that the gall and vinegar were given merely to fulfil prophecy.

The author of the Fourth Gospel says again (xix. 33, 34):—

“But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: howbeit, one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side.”

The circumstance here mentioned being unknown to the Synoptists, as well as to everyone else except the mendacious writer himself, that contemptible forger, personating the apostle John, says (xix. 35-37):—

“And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe. For these things came to pass that the *scripture might be fulfilled*, ‘A bone of him shall not be broken.’ And, again, another scripture saith: ‘They shall look on him whom they pierced.’”

Here, again, we can say without fear of refutation that “these things” did *not* come to pass to fulfil the passage quoted. The first of these is from Psalm xxxiv. 19, 20, and reads:—

“Many are the afflictions of the *righteous*: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.”

In this passage the bones spoken of are those of “the righteous”—viz., of every person who kept God’s commandments. The writer states in effect that, though “the righteous” may sometimes be afflicted, they will ultimately be preserved uninjured. Also, “bones being broken” is a purely figurative expression, as will be seen in the following passage (Psalm li. 8):—

“Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the *bones which thou hast broken* may rejoice.”

We have thus another proof of fraud in the concoction of the Gospel narratives. The second passage quoted by the Fourth evangelist (*i.e.*, Zech. xii. 10) merely predicts that the Jews should return to the worship of Jehovah whom they had forsaken, and that in that day idols should be

banished from the land (xiii. 2)—another clear proof of fabrication.

Lastly, if we desire to know why “a darkness came over the whole earth.....the sun’s light failing” at noon on the day of the crucifixion, we have but to turn to Amos viii. 9, which reads:—

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon.”

We thus see that the darkness at the crucifixion, like all the other circumstances connected with that alleged event, took place in fulfilment of prophecy. No one, it is true, ever witnessed this great phenomenon, and nobody but the Gospel-writers ever heard of it; but the event must have happened, for it was predicted by a Jewish cow-herd; hence it is recorded by the three Synoptists.

Here I bring this series of papers to a close, though many of the Gospel narratives still remain to be dealt with, notably those relating to the alleged resurrection. Enough, however, have been examined to prove to any rational person that the Gospel accounts of the life of Christ are not only unhistorical, but were deliberately fabricated by some of the early Christians.

ABRACADABRA.

Obituary.

DIED, at 17 Alexandra-road, Hornsey, on January 14, Harriet Truelove, wife of Mr. Edward Truelove, the veteran advanced bookseller and publisher, to whom she had been married over fifty-seven years. Mrs. Truelove was a most intelligent woman, and, although in her eighty-fifth year, could recall the many important books she had read, and persons of note she had met. Among these were Robert Owen, W. J. Fox, Harriet Martineau, Mrs. Rose, Ernest Jones, W. J. Linton, and many other advanced men and women. She had courage and conscience as well as culture, as became the helpmate of a brave and honest man. Most interesting was it to hear her recall the experiment in communal life at Harmony Hall, in which she and her husband took part, and the days of the John-street Institution, where he was long secretary. For some time Mrs. Truelove had been in a very feeble condition, but she was ever devotedly attended by her daughter, and at the last by Mrs. Mascall. She passed away quite peacefully. We tender our respectful sympathy to our veteran friend and to Miss Truelove in their bereavement.

WE regret to notice that Mr. M. D. Conway has also suffered bereavement by the death of his wife, Ellen Dana Conway. Mrs. Conway was well known and esteemed both in America and England. She was an invalid for some time, and her return to her native country appears not to have produced the desired benefit. Like her husband, she believed in freedom of thought, and accompanied him on his way from orthodoxy to Unitarianism, and onward. Her sufferings from illness had brought her to look upon death as a welcome messenger, whom she entertained without fear.

Credulity.

Credulity is a natural infirmity; for children and dotards, idiots and simpletons, are all remarkably credulous. It may be laid down as an axiom that the slowest and weakest reasoners are the readiest and strongest believers. The best remedy of credulousness is an early introduction to philosophic scepticism; for the mind having a natural bias or turn towards credulity requires to be forced to the opposite extreme to bring it straight.—*James Gillespie, 1817.*

The Church pleases to style Materialism “The Gospel of Negation.” Indeed! What do we deny? A solitary fact, truth, an object of knowledge, or what? The priest cannot answer. We simply deny their bold affirmations, originated in ages of ignorance, and which at the present day are farther from being maintained by the data of science than ever before. Materialists affirm that nature is all, that it is supreme, and that it contains within itself all the elements and the cogencies needed to evolve cosmic and animal life. This the Church denies. These self-evident facts, revealed to the humblest human being by science and his own senses, it ignores. Which is the “Gospel of Negation”? Which is the true “unbeliever”?—*O. Wettstein.*

Truth needs no veil, and you would not hesitate to expose the delusions of your unfortunate fellow men if you did not desire their welfare less than you fear their prejudices.—*Felix L. Oswald.*

MAX MÜLLER ON RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Christian World* has been interviewing Professor Max Müller at Oxford on the subject of religion. He was asked the pointed question:—

"Do you distinguish between human guesses and divine revelation?"

"I believe in one revelation only—the revelation within us, which is much better than any revelations that come from without. Why should we look for God and listen for his voice outside us only, and not within us? Where is the temple of God, or the true kingdom of God?"

In answer to a question as to whether he considered the Bible a revelation, he said:—

"So far as the Christian Scriptures contain the doctrines of Christ they are inspired by Christ, and, inasmuch as Christ stands much higher than the ancient sages and prophets, of course they are inspired in a higher sense. We now understand how sacred writings came into existence. Every religion begins with the teaching of one man, who attaches to himself a select few—twelve or some other number. At first there is no need of writing; the initial stage of every religion is one of oral tradition, of conversation between those who believe in the same teacher and those who believe not yet. It is in the second and third generation that the need of a written record is felt. The study of all religions shows that first there was a period of incubation, fermentation, conversation; then came the time when things must be written down; and I believe the want of such writings was first felt in the education of children. When the Old Testament was no longer the sacred book of the early Christians, the mothers wanted something in its place to teach their children; and if there is a demand there is sure to be a supply. So different families began to write down what they had heard from Matthew, Mark, John, or others. Our gospels are not the gospels of, but 'according to,' Matthew, Mark, John. What they believed St. John to have told them, that they wrote down."

"Which method, of course, did not exclude the possibility of error?"

"On the contrary, it opened the door very wide indeed to misunderstanding and error, and that gives us our freedom. In oral tradition misunderstandings are inevitable."

Max Müller illustrated this by the doctrines of the supernatural birth and the ascension. He is reported as saying:—

"To talk of an immaculate conception is simply an insult to the author of our existence. And so with the idea of a bodily ascension. First of all, it is not mentioned in all the Gospels. Such an event, had it happened, could not have been overlooked, for all the laws of gravity would have been suddenly broken and the whole world would have trembled. But what can be more beautiful than a return to His Father in heaven? What more grotesque than an ascent, a flight through the clouds, and arrival at some corner of the blue sky?"

After this it is surprising to read that the Professor is a firm believer in some sort of eternal punishment, in which, however, "there may be a good deal of love."

Max Müller said: "A great deal depends upon the way a thing is said. I remember Arthur Helps telling me, 'My dear fellow, in England you can say anything, if you know how to say it.'"

The Professor seems to have taken this saying to heart.

BOOK CHAT.

A YEAR ago a group of Cambridge theological lecturers requested the Divinity professors to take the weaknesses of Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* into consideration. And the professors did so; with such effect that the General Board of Studies has formally reported to the University that Paley's book ought to be wholly discarded as a subject of examination, and be replaced by a paper on Old Testament History.

Mr. Wilfrid Ward, in his *Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman*, contests the accuracy of Browning's acknowledged sketch of the dignitary in Bishop Blougram's Apology. We think the poet had fifty times the insight into character of the biographer. Anyway, Browning's sketch will out-last the bulky volumes of Ward. Of course Sylvester Blougram is typical, and stands for more than the Cardinal. Many Anglican dignitaries come close to the type. The late Archbishop Thomson of York might almost have sat for the portrait.

L. Massebieu has contended that the epistle of James in the New Testament was really written by a Hellenist Jew before the time of Christ, that Paul shows acquaintance with the epistle, and that some Christian copyist inserted

the name of Christ in two places. He argues that its theology has nothing to do with Messianic teaching or Christianity.

Keijiro Nakamura, of Tokyo, Japan, writes in the *International Journal of Ethics* on "The History and Spirit of Chinese Ethics." Here is what he says on the system of Confucius, who was born B.C. 551: "The keynote of Confucianism is Love. The 'Lun-Yu' is but an explanation of love. Confucius said: 'If a man does not love his neighbors, what is the use of music and etiquette?' Confucius regards music and etiquette as means, and love as the end. In another place Confucius emphasized the importance of love: 'If the will be set on Love, there will be no practice of wickedness. An ideal man can never act contrary to Love, even while he is taking a meal. He reminds himself of it even in moments of haste or danger.' Tau [the path] is, according to Confucius, a man's vocation, and Love is the Kernel of Tau." Believers in the Christian claim for moral monopoly ought to read the paper of this Japanese.

Jésus de Nazareth, by Albert Réville (Paris: Fischbacher; 2 vols.), is another of the many critical studies of the origins of Christianity, and of the life of its reputed founder. It is distinguished beyond the common ruck by representing the ripe and rich fruit of a long life of scholarship. M. Réville is more truly a critic than M. Renan, yet his results are much the same. He finds a real teacher beneath the miraculous legends, and, while dismissing these, depends far more closely on the words of the gospels than, we think, a true criticism warrants. With Renan he ascribes the belief in the resurrection to visions. But the work is one which deserves a thorough and careful examination.

A Norwegian of the University of Christiania, named Anathon Aall, has published in German an important study of the development of the doctrine of the Logos in Greek philosophy and Christian literature. The doctrine is traced to Heraclitus, to whom a long chapter is devoted.

A very interesting lecture on "The Antiquities of the Isle of Man," by W. H. Quilliam, Esq., B.A., has been published by the Crescent Printing Company, 32 Elizabeth-street, Liverpool. Mr. Quilliam is thoroughly at home in his subject, which is of great interest to antiquaries. The isolated position of the Isle of Man has preserved many curious traditions, as, for instance, that King Orry descended from the skies. The three legs of man is considered not as any symbol of the Trinity, but rather as a survival of the flaming wheel of Thor.

Mr. Stephen Phillips has received for his volume of poems the prize of one hundred guineas awarded by the *Academy* for the best book of 1897. Mr. W. E. Henley takes fifty guineas for his essay on Burns.

In *The Mysteries: Pagan and Christian*, by the Rev. S. Cheetham, one of the editors of the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, endeavors to minimize the evidence brought by Preller, Havet, Renan, Hatch, and Gardner, that the Christian sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are derived from the Pagan mysteries.

There is an article in the January *Cosmopolitan* on the American Freethinking philanthropist, Stephen Girard, who endowed a college for orphans with the express stipulation that no minister of religion should ever enter the building—a condition which has been shamefully over-ridden.

Is God Knowable? by Aristippus, a twopenny pamphlet, published by D. G. Lindsay, 82 Ingram-street, Glasgow, is a very sensible and temperate defence of Agnosticism, displaying shrewd logic and keen appreciation of the difficulties of the Theistic position.

PROFANE JOKES.

KIND Lady (at door)—"I am lady president of the Charity Society, and we never give to beggars at the door. But here are some tracts; they are good for"—Tramp—"Will the kind lady please put a taste of butter on them, and I'll try to digest them?"

Sabbath-school teacher—"Who was Esau?" Johnny Thickhead—"The—er—er—author of Esau's fables, ma'am."

Clergyman (to tramp)—"I cannot conscientiously assist you. You toil not; neither do you spin." Tramp—"Don't you believe it. No yarn in the world comes up to 'em I can spin, and I can spin 'em all day long if I'm encouraged. Got any beer in the house?"

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, Concert by the Finsbury Branch N.S.S.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Medicine"; at 8.30, or after lecture, annual general meeting of members; important business.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, E. Pack; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Way to Heaven."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (King's Hall 83 & 85 Commercial-road, E.): 6.45, W. Heaford, "The Evolution of the God Idea."

EDMONTON (Theatre Royal, Angel-road): 7, J. Ramsey, "The Limit of State Control."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion on "Tolstoi," opened by O. Eucklesby; 7, J. Clarke, M.A., "The Ethics of Self-sacrifice."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Professor Rhys Davids, "The Secret of Buddhism."

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY ("Barley Mow," Horseferry-road): 7.30, Chilperic Edwards, "The Book of Jonah in the Light of the Higher Criticism."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, R. Forder, "The Gospel Jesus: History or Myth."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye-lane): Jan. 22, 8, E. Pack, "Men and Manners."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 8.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): C. Watts—11, "Morality versus Superstition"; 7, "Can God Do Wrong?" Jan. 26 & 27, at 8 each evening, Debate with Rev. A. J. Waldron, subject: "Are the Character and Teachings of Christ in Harmony with the Nature and Needs of Man?"

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, Mr. Whitney, A reading.

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, impromptu speeches; 6.30, Mr. Campbell, "Gems of Scottish Scenery," with lime-light illustrations.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, R. Triumper, "Master and Man."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): Touzeau Parris—11, "More Facts About the Bible Everyone Should Know"; 6.30, "Is Paul an Historic Personage?"

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, A. Crompton, "What is Positivism?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Waincoat, "Political Programme and Practical Politics."

NEWCASTLE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): H. P. Ward—11, "Shall we Live after we are Dead?"; 3, "What will you Give us in Place of Christianity?—A Secularist's Answer"; 7, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secularist Platform."

SEEFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): O. Cohen—11, "Evolution and its Gospel"; 3, "What is the Use of Religion?"; 7, "The Collapse of Christianity." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncau's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—January 23, Sheffield; 30, Manchester. February 6, Manchester; 13 and 14, Birmingham; 20 and 27, Liverpool. March 6, Liverpool.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—January 23, North Camberwell Club and Institute.

H. PERCY WARD, 6 Wawne Grove, Alexandra-road, Hull.—January 23, Newcastle. February 20 to 27, Manchester. March 6 to 11, Mission at Derby; 13, Birmingham; 20, Sheffield. April 17, Glasgow.

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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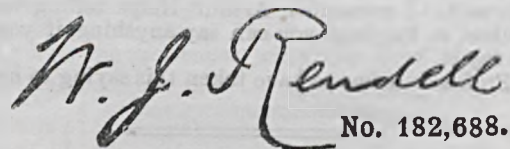
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