

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

ZOLA'S TRIAL.

ONE of the greatest judicial farces on record has come to an end, and Zola has been found guilty of libel. The jury's verdict was unanimous, and the judge sentenced the defendant to twelve months' imprisonment—the maximum allowed by the law, besides ordering him to pay a considerable fine and the costs of the prosecution. This lovely judgment was fiercely acclaimed by the mob in court as well as by the vast mob outside. The Army was vindicated, and the man of letters taught his proper place. The said man of letters, however, by no means bows to this decision. "They must be cannibals," he exclaimed as the verdict of "Guilty" was delivered. It is not quite clear whether he referred to the jury or to the howling mob. At any rate, the exclamation recalls Voltaire's *mot* about the Paris mob—half tiger and half ape.

We have called Zola's trial a farce, although it has a tragic aspect. He was prosecuted for libel, and mainly for insulting the Army; and day after day his virtual prosecutors swore to their own innocence, while he was not allowed to ask them a single question that might prove their guilt. They were also allowed to harangue the jury about "the traitor Dreyfus," but when it came to details they pleaded reasons of State for their silence. Esterhazy himself turned his back to Zola's counsel for an hour and a half while questions were put to him, declining to give a single answer, and the judge supported him in this contumacy. General de Boisdeffre plainly told the jury that the safety of France depended on their finding Zola guilty; if they did not, he intimated that the General Staff would resign, and as war might come very soon, much sooner than many people suspected, Frenchmen would be led like sheep to the slaughter. This miserable, this infamous appeal to the craven instincts of the crowd was allowed to pass without rebuke. Worse still, it was actually applauded. The Generals are posing as the indispensable saviors of France. The fighting man rattles his sabre on the pavement and cries "Behold your God," and the people fall down and worship. And the cream of the joke is that these Generals are almost absolutely untried. One would think they had just returned from a hundred battles, in which they had overwhelmed the combined forces of Europe. It is enough to provoke the laughter of other nations. These Alexanders of the autumn reviews, these Napoleons of the barracks, expose themselves to universal derision; and the Paris mob does the same when it vociferates "Vive L'Armée!" till it is nearly black in the face, when it catches sight of a couple of knock-kneed lieutenants in uniform and spectacles. Some excuse, at least, might be found for men fascinated by the eagle eyes and imperial brow of a Buonaparte, and the glamor of his many victories; but the latest phase of militarism in France is simply and utterly contemptible.

In the background of all this sorry performance stands the sinister figure of the Church. The leaders of the anti-Jewish agitation in France are Catholics, and the length to which it has been carried may be seen in the general belief that if Zola had been acquitted there would have been something like a massacre of Jews in Paris. The Catholic Church has always hated the Jews. They will not have more than one God, which is a standing affront to those who have three; they persist in rejecting Jesus Christ; and on the

top of all this obstinacy they persist in being a little more, instead of less, moral than their Christian fellow citizens. For centuries the Catholic Church compelled Jews to traffic and lend money. Everything else was forbidden them. And now, when a Gentile is after a bargain, and finds a Jew in front of him, instead of cursing the bigotry of his forefathers, he cries: "Down with the Jews!" After Zola's trial this cry grew into "Death to the Jews!" A sinister sound! It makes one tremble with apprehension of murder; it makes one blush for one's species. Eighteen hundred years of Christianity has left Europe only half civilized.

Zola will appeal against his sentence, and it remains to see whether the judges will connive at the flagrant irregularities of his trial. If they do, the best friends of France must admit that she is in a very parlous condition. The only thing that saves the Republic is the absence of the military chief strong enough to deal it the fatal blow.

Meanwhile the Government is showing itself the creature of the mob and the tool of the Army. Colonel Picquart, who gave evidence in Zola's favor, is cashiered. He committed the unpardonable crime of thinking honor should stand before mere *esprit de corps*. M. Leblois is dismissed from his post of Sub-Mayor of the Seventh Arrondissement. Professor Grimaux is dismissed from the Ecole Polytechnique, although his brother professors have almost unanimously testified to their high appreciation of his character and courage. Professor Grimaux was summoned as a witness, he told the truth according to his conscience, and for this crime he is punished. This sort of thing went on freely enough under the Empire; one did not expect it under the Republic.

One thing came out clearly enough in Zola's trial. It is beyond question that Dreyfus was condemned illegally. It appears, too, that the evidence against him was of a most fantastic character. Even the foreman of the jury, M. Drestrieux, told a *Temps* interviewer: "I believe the defenders of the ex-Captain may succeed, and in fact they will now succeed. Allow me to confess that I wish they may." General Mercier gave his case away in an unguarded moment. Being asked whether he presented to the Court Martial a document against Dreyfus behind the prisoner's back, and behind that of his counsel, General Mercier denied it with indignation. M. Labori saw his opportunity and used it. He asked this witness whether such a document was presented to the Court Martial by anyone. General Mercier, recovering his presence of mind, declined to answer the question. But he did not see, after all, that silence was an answer in the circumstances; and that to every man of common sense only one conclusion was possible. As for the *bordereau* which Dreyfus is supposed to have written, the trial has resulted in its complete extinction as evidence against him. This is a clear gain, and Zola may be congratulated on his success so far in his campaign on behalf of a man whom he holds to be a martyr of anti-Semitism.

Zola himself comes out of this trial with flying colors. The verdict of a terrorized jury and the sentence of a partial judge are nothing. He has earned the admiration or the civilized world. Mr. Gosse, who was once a budding poet, and is now a respectable critic, deplors the spectacle of a man of letters turning a man of action; but Zola is made of other metal than Mr. Gosse; he believes, like Voltaire, that the pen should become a sword in the vindication of justice and humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

A FIERY FURNACE.

CHRISTIANITY is Janus-faced. One side is bright, benignant, sleek, and softly cooing as the doves of Kutherea; the other is gloomy, malignant, and wreathed with snakes like some grim Gorgon or chimera dire. One side is smeared with treacle; the other with brimstone. It is usually only the honied aspect which is offered to-day for public inspection. From a myriad pulpits the beauties and merits of Christianity are trumpeted forth Sunday by Sunday. Yet it may be well to note the dreadful aspect which in past ages excited men to religious wars and persecution, or brutalized them with terror. What gave Christianity its power in the past, what still is its potency over the plastic minds of children, is not the faint, fabled delights of its fantastic heaven; but the harsh horrors of its tangible fiery hell, its devil, its predicted near approach of the end of the world, with a day of judgment and its irrevocable doom. It is these doctrines, with the fancied escape through innocent blood, which bespeak its barbarous origin and maintain its hold among the barbarous-minded. Which comes more home to the average child, the pleasant verse—

There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain;

or this:—

There is a dreadful hell,
And everlasting pains,
Where sinners must with devils dwell,
In darkness, fire, and chains?

How sweetly ecstatic can Catholicism be, with its sensuous art and saintly aspiration. But, if we wish to see the other side, we must read its books for children—as, for instance, the notorious *Sight of Hell*, by Father Furness, still issued “permissu superiorum” by James Duffy, of 15 Wellington Quay, Dublin, and to be had of all Catholic booksellers. This is how it begins: “Every little child knows that God will reward the good in heaven and punish the wicked in hell. Where, then, is hell? Is hell above or below? Is it on the earth, or in the earth, or below the earth? It seems likely that hell is in the middle of the earth. Almighty God has said that ‘He will turn the wicked into the bowels of the earth’ (Eccles. xvii.)”

Then it tells of the earth opening up to swallow Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. “And they went down alive into hell. Then the earth closed up over them again (Num. xvi.). The same thing happened another time, as you will see.” And another tall tale is given from St. Gregory. Then the appropriately-named Father escorts his little flock to the gates of hell:—

“See also the vast thickness, the tremendous strength of those gates. In a prison on earth there are not, perhaps, more than two or three hundred prisoners; still the gates of a prison are made most strong with iron, and with bars, and with bolts, and with locks, for fear the prisoners should break down the gates and get away. Do not wonder, then, at the immense strength of the Gates of Hell. In hell there are not two or three hundred prisoners only. Millions on millions are shut up there. They are tormented with the most frightful pains. These dreadful pains make them furious. Their fury gives them strength, such as we never saw. We read of a man who had the fury of hell in him. He was so strong that he could easily break in pieces great chains of iron (Mark v.). The vast multitudes in hell, strong in their fury and despair, rush forward like the waves of the sea. They dash themselves up against the Gates of Hell to break them in pieces. This is the reason why those gates are so strong. No hand of man could make such gates. Jesus Christ said that the Gates of Hell should not prevail against his Church, because in hell there is nothing stronger than its gates.”

He shows the children how the floor “is red-hot—like red-hot iron. Streams of burning pitch and sulphur run through it” (Is. xxxiv.). “The floor blazes up to the roof, which is “like a sheet of burning fire.” “Hell is filled with a fog of fire.” “In hell torrent, not of rain, but of fire and brimstone, are rained down” (Psalm x.). “The Lord shall rain down on sinners fire and brimstone.” In hell the hailstones are thunderbolts, red-hot balls of fire.

“You may have seen a house on fire, but you never saw a house made of fire. Hell is a house made of fire. The fire of hell burns the devils who are spirits, for it

was prepared for them (Matt. xxv.). So it will burn the soul as well as the body. Take a spark out of the kitchen fire, throw it into the sea, and it will go out. Take a little spark out of hell less than a pin-head, throw it into the ocean, it will not go out. In one moment it would dry up all the waters of the ocean, and set the whole world in a blaze. Wisd. xvi.: ‘The fire, above its power, burnt in the midst of water.’ Set a house or town on fire. Perhaps the fire may burn for a week, or a month, but it will go out at last. But the fire of hell will never go out; it will burn for ever. It is *unquenchable fire* (Matt. iv.). St. Teresa says that the fire on the earth is only a *picture* of the fire of hell. Fire on earth gives light. But it is not so in hell. In hell the fire is dark.”

This holy teacher of infants then graphically depicts the stifling and choking smoke and stench of hell, where there “will be the smell of death from countless millions and millions of bodies laid in hell like sheep. How will the horrible smell of all these bodies be, after it has been getting worse and worse every moment for ten thousand years? Isaiah lxvi.: ‘They shall go out and see the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me. They shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh.’” Gentle reader, do not laugh at the repulsive rubbish of this divinely-revealed religion, whose doctrines, as Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, if really believed in, ought to produce insanity in every well-regulated mind. Consider its holy purpose—to dominate by terror the minds of the future generation. Is there anything on earth more worthy the epithet, “damnable”?

“But listen now—listen to the tremendous, the horrible uproar of millions and millions and millions of tormented creatures mad with the fury of hell. Oh, the screams of fear, the groanings of horror, the yells of rage, the cries of pain, the shouts of agony, the shrieks of despair from millions on millions. There you hear them roaring like lions, hissing like serpents, howling like dogs, and wailing like dragons; there you hear the gnashing of teeth and the fearful blasphemies of the devils. Above all, you hear the roaring of the thunders of God’s anger, which shakes hell to its foundations. But there is another sound!.....It is the sound of oceans of tears running down from countless millions of eyes. They cry night and day. They cry for ever and ever. They cry because the sulphurous smoke torments their eyes. They cry because they are in darkness. They cry because they have lost the beautiful heaven. They cry because the sharp fire burns them. Little child, it is better to cry one tear of repentance now than to cry millions of tears in hell.”

Then Father Furness escorts his infant flock into the lake of fire and brimstone to “see the tremendous torments prepared for the wicked.” But these flowers of the fervid fancy of Father Furness, or rather of his Church, must be reserved for another week. Meantime, I ask the reader to reflect on the fact that the book from which I have given these extracts is published with the sanction and the responsibility of the largest church in Christendom—the church which claims England as the patrimony of St. Peter, the dowry of the Blessed Virgin.

J. M. WHEELER.

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS.”

“IN these three words,” says the *Rock* (February 11), “is the whole secret of life.” This statement contains one of the many fallacies which are continually being indulged in by orthodox believers as to the beneficial influence of Christ upon human conduct. We presume that what is here meant by the “secret of life” is a knowledge of those facts whereby we may be enabled to make our careers good and useful. But, surely, “looking unto Christ” can render us but little aid in doing this. To accomplish such a desirable result we need to look at ourselves, and at the conditions by which we are surrounded, with a view of regulating our actions by rules which govern and promote both personal and general improvement. Not even the context of the passage where the words “looking unto Jesus” occur (Hebrews xii. 2) says anything about the “secret of life”; it simply refers to Christ in his spiritual aspect, without as much as giving a hint as to the requirements of a noble and progressive existence. It is time that this delusion about Christ’s influence upon human conduct was dispelled. The truth is, that it is not the

Jesus of the New Testament whose power is thus exaggerated, but a character of the Christian's own imagination. As the Rev. James Cranbrook candidly admits: "We see him [Jesus] not as he is described, but as the ideally perfect man our own fancies have conceived. But let anyone sit down and critically analyse the sayings and doings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels—let him divest his mind of the superstitious fear of irreverence, and then ask himself whether all those sayings and doings are in harmony with the highest wisdom speaking for all ages and races of mankind, and with the conceptions of an absolutely perfect human nature, and I am mistaken if he will not find a very great deal he will be forced to condemn" (*Founders of Christianity*, preface, p. 5).

"Looking unto Jesus"! What Jesus? The man, the God, a combination of the two, or a phantom? In the times of the apostles it was believed, we are told, that Christ had no corporeal existence. At the present day Trinitarians look upon Christ as God, but Unitarians regard him only as a man, while the Swedenborgians think him to be "a divine humanity." Where is the real Jesus to be found? In the Gospels? But these documents are admitted by many learned Christians not to be trustworthy. The position taken by such writers as Cheyne, Davidson, Gore, Professor Schmidt, Driver, and Farrar was long since anticipated by Dean Alford, who, in his book, *How to Study the New Testament*, says: "These Gospels, so important to the Church, have not come to us in one undisputed form. We have no authorized copy of them in their original language, so that we may know in what precise words they were originally written. The authorities from which we derive their sacred text are various ancient copies written by hand on parchment. Of the Gospels there are more than five hundred of these manuscripts of various ages, from the fourth century after Christ to the fifteenth, when printing superseded manual writing for publication of books. Of these five hundred, and more, no two are in all points alike—probably in no two of the more ancient can even a few consecutive verses be found in which all the words agree.....It is not a word more than the truth to say that it [the New Testament] abounds with errors and inadequate renderings.....A formidable list of passages might be given in which our version either has confessedly misrendered the original, or has followed a form of the text now well known not to have been the original form" (pp. 18-21, 22).

Besides, in the Gospels there are really two Christs depicted; to which shall we look for guidance? The lessons conveyed by the one are counteracted by the other. Mr. George Jacob Holyoake urges this fact admirably in his Cowper-street debate with the Rev. Browin Grant. Mr. Holyoake says: "When I came to re-examine the New Testament as a book of advocacy I found it to contain a revelation of two Christs—Christ the Gentle and Christ the Austere; Christ the Gentle, submitting, loving, suffering, serving; Christ the Austere, imperious, frowning, dark, terrible, punishing; and I could not trust *him* who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' while I thought of him who said, 'The believer shall be saved, and the unbeliever shall be damned.' I could not trust *him* who said, 'Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you,' while I thought of him who said, with equal emphasis, 'Whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven'; who said that 'in the end of the world he would send his angels to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' Now, his gentle words distil, like the songs of morning, over the earth, and you think that mankind are about to welcome the dawning reign of love, and you exult as you think you behold the rays of the sun of salvation shooting up in the eastern sky, when anon you start and shudder at the sight of the hideous 'worm that never dies' crawling before your path, and the heavens first grow dark, and then lurid, with the flames that are never quenched. You listen, and you hear a voice of affection saying, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God'; then there breaks on the astonished ear the menacing and Draconian warning, 'Whoever shall offend one of the little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into

the sea.' In assuring accents you are invited to 'Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life'; and the next moment reason is appalled and paralyzed by those ominous words, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned'—words which read to the conscientious thinker like the handwriting upon the wall" (p. 137).

"Looking unto Jesus"! For what? To emulate his example, and to obey his teachings? As society is at present constituted, it is impossible to do either. Who will dare to imitate his example in the following instances? When he drove the merchants out of the temple with a "scourge of small cords," and overthrew the tables of the money-changers (John ii. 14, 15); when he rode into Jerusalem upon an ass and a colt, which he sent his disciples to obtain in a very questionable manner (Matt. xxi. 2-8); when he cursed the fig-tree because he found no figs on it, for the good reason that "the time of figs was not yet" (Mark xi. 13, 20, and 21); when he cast out devils from the human body (Mark i. 34 and Luke iv. 33, 40, 41); when he showed a reckless disregard for the feelings of his mother, and spoke to her in most contemptuous language (Luke ii. 49 and John ii. 4); when, having accepted an invitation to dine with a certain Pharisee, he returned the hospitality by abusing his host and calling him and his friends "fools"—and all because the Pharisee "marvelled that he [Jesus] had not first washed before dinner" (Luke xi. 37-40); and when he termed his predecessors "thieves and robbers" (John x. 8). Here we have upon the part of Jesus an exhibition of rudeness, fanaticism, passion, superstition, ingratitude, egotism, and lack of filial affection that no one at the present day could emulate without being justly regarded as destitute of a sense of justice, honor, wisdom, and of duty to parents.

Equally futile would it be to try to obey the following injunctions ascribed to Jesus:—To practise self-mutilation (Matt. v. 29, 30; xix. 12); to regard the duties of this life as of secondary importance (Matt. vi. 25-34); to hate your relatives, and even your own life (Luke xiv. 26); to accept a premium for deserting wife, children, etc. (Mark x. 29, 30); "lend, hoping for nothing again" (Luke vi. 35); "give to every man that asketh of thee" (Luke vi. 30); forgive your brother until seventy-times seven (Matt. xviii. 21, 22); "resist not evil"; if a man "take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"; "swear not at all"; "love your enemies" (Matt. v. 34, 39, 40, 44); whatsoever two persons agree to ask of Christ, that shall be done (Matt. xviii. 19); when believers go on a journey they should take no scrip, no bread, no money, and not put on two coats (Mark vi. 8, 9); they shall have power to cast out devils and drink any deadly thing, which shall not hurt them (Mark xvi. 17, 18). These are a few of Christ's teachings which no prudent or sane man would attempt to practise. Where, then, is the utility of "looking unto Jesus"? So peculiar are many of his injunctions that he appears to have been unable to apply them to his own conduct. For instance, we are informed that Jesus said (Matt. v. 22): "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire"; yet we find him exclaiming, "Ye fools, ye fools and blind" (Luke xi. 40; Matt. xxiii. 17). He advised others to "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you," while he himself addressed those who were not his friends as "hypocrites" (Matt. vii. 5); "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers" (Matt. xxiii. 33). In Luke (vi. 37) he counsels us to "forgive, and ye shall be forgiven"; but in Mark (iii. 29) it is stated: "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." No marvel that the Rev. A. H. Craufurd, of Oriel College, Oxford, states that "the Christianity of Jesus had never even been tried" (*Rock*, July 23, 1897).

As a proof that those who profess to believe in Jesus form a fictitious estimate of him rather than judge him by the Gospel records, we may refer to a special article, entitled "The Universal Christ," by the Rev. Dr. Hunter, which appeared in the *Christian World* of January 27 last. Therein we read that Christ's "sympathies were universal in their range and character.....there was nothing narrow and exclusive about him." So far is this from being correct that it would be difficult to ascribe to Christ anything that is more opposite to what the New Testament says of him. He is there represented as saying: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"

(Matt. xv. 24). He said to his disciples, or apostles: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not" (Matt. x. 5). He took no notice of the woman of Canaan, who cried to him on behalf of her daughter, upon the plea that "it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto dogs." When, however, he thought the woman believed on him he complied with her request, thus granting to faith what he had denied to humanity (Matt. xv. 21-28). A more narrow and exclusive character it is hardly possible to find than the one given to the Jesus of the New Testament.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE LITERATURE OF FANATICISM.

THE literature of to-day may safely be divided into three classes—i.e., good, indifferent, and bad. In the latter class we place pernicious books of a sanguinary nature; and it is to the second division that we must assign the majority of religious journals, and, although many are unworthy of the paper they are printed on, it may prove interesting, if not instructive, to examine into the source from which the fanatics derive their inspiration. Of course, in the space available, a thorough analysis would be as impossible as unprofitable, and, therefore, for the purpose of this article it is proposed to take a representative journal. The *War Cry* and other army publications are too well known to need comment. Their influence, if any, cannot but be bad; while the ferocity of their declamations and assertions can only fill the rational reader with disgust. The paper I have before me is of a milder and somewhat superior nature. It is called *Tongues of Fire*, the organ of the Pentecostal League, and is ostensibly published for the promotion of spiritual life, purity, and power. It is certainly a large order; let us see how it attempts to fulfil it. By the way, however, it is worthy of note how this, and others of the same type, offend in the nature of its title. Apparently hell-fire is a prominent factor in the League's articles of faith.

The front page of *Tongues* is, for the most part, sheer nonsense, under the heading of "Hot-Shot." It consists in the main of forty paragraphs of various lengths, from which we will select a few at random. We give the paragraphs in entirety, but cannot attempt to explain their meaning or use. (1) "Beware of gush and grudge." (2) "The man who bought the pearl of greatest price gave all he had for it." (3) "Neither be idle with the means nor make an idol of the means."

A joke is evidently intended in number three; but, seriously, how can any sane person hope to further the cause of spiritual life, etc., by such rubbish? How the demure damsels and bemitted and be-spectacled old maids must enjoy perusing this twaddle!

Again: "We all admire men of conviction until they disturb our prejudices or practices." How candid! and, at the same time, how true of the fanatics! Confession is undoubtedly good for the soul, but surely the Pentecostal League are wrong in divulging so freely the secret of their animosity towards the unbelievers.

Again: "A minister writes: 'What would you advise me to read to make me more useful and give me more power?' We reply: 'Read the Holy Bible, and holiness literature that will help you to believe the Bible means all it says.'"

Of course "holiness literature," translated, means "Tongues of Fire." Verily, this is an age of self-advertisement. At the foot of page one is the commencement of an article boldly entitled "Signs of the Approaching End of the Age," and sub-titled "Notes of the Editor's Address at the Watch-Night Service." Even as a collection of notes the thing is an unparalleled failure. The text chosen was: "Let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober." Then, by some unexplained process of logic, the text is made to refer to the end of the age, and is, therefore, a most suitable one. After an oration, describing what a year of mighty increase and more mighty promise it has been to the League, we are astounded to learn that, while it has been a year of jubilee at home, abroad it has been a year of war. This unfortunate combination of circumstances is ascribed to the upbraiding of the Lord because the people of his day do not understand the signs of the times. The speaker proceeds

to divide his signs into two heads, and to deduce from them the near end of the age. His gullibility is stupendous!

"Wars, and rumors of wars, are to be met with in every newspaper. The condition of things is so strained that war on a colossal scale seems almost inevitable. The fact that millions of men, armed, at prodigious expense, with the latest scientific weapons for the destruction of their fellows, await but the word of command to fall upon one another, is by itself a menace to the peace of the world, and a plain fulfilment of our Lord's words."

Comment on such ridiculous utterances is needless. Earthquakes, famines, and pestilences are quoted as further natural signs. That there are people foolish enough to listen to such nonsense is most certainly a sign of degeneration.

Leaving "natural signs," the speaker passed on to "spiritual signs." After animadverting on the "widespread prevalence of great wickedness," a scoffing finger is pointed to the condition of the Established Churches. This is another sign of the end of the age, and the apostles are quoted in substantiation. Then we are gravely informed, in contradiction to all statistics, that the Jews have been returning to Palestine for many years past.

"Then the banishment of the Jews from Russia, and their persecution in many continental countries, is another sign.....All sorts of conditions are inciting the Jews to return once more to their own country.....The last of the spiritual signs.....is the activity of God's people.....The holiness movement has become a mighty power in the world." And so on, for another half a column, the changes of self-praise are rung. It is impossible to imagine how this false concatenation of misleading statements can further the interests of their cause. They must, indeed, be weak-minded people who can subscribe to, and read, papers of this description. It is certain that the reverend gentlemen who contribute to this specimen believe in the efficacy of a good title. For instance, "The Old Hen," by the Rev. J. Thompson; "Ever-green Life," by the Rev. H. Codling; "Even As," by Mrs. Bambridge. The first of these articles is absolutely devoid of a grain of sense or meaning; and, were it not for the name attached, might easily be taken for the product of a drivelling idiot.

On page 4 a column and a half is devoted to questions worth answering. If some of the questions are genuine, the existence of the paper, in a measure, is justified. The following two are fair examples of the whole:—

Question.—"Please explain what is meant by the Valley of the Shadow of Death."

Q.—"Is it right to sell the reversion of property in view of the near coming of the Lord?"

The answer to the latter conveys a serious caution against the belief in a fixed date, "as many persons by so doing have rashly disposed of their belongings, and brought on themselves.....irreparable evils."

We candidly confess a disbelief in the existence of the "many persons"; but the humor of it is greatly intensified when we learn from an editorial note that this question has been sent by a resident in China; or perhaps this note should be read as an excuse.

In point of style and lucidity, the editorials are a decided improvement upon the foregoing matter. They are strong with a false strength, and written with a fluency worthy of sounder subjects. But here, again, the Pentecostals show their hand. They say: "Fanaticism, even in its worst form.....however much to be deprecated, is nothing in comparison to hell-fire. Therefore, let us specially beware of erring on the more dangerous side in placing the standard of personal piety too low."

What an eloquent appeal for the lesser of two evils! But does not this conclusively prove Fear to be the fundamental basis of their belief? Surely the inculcation of such ideas must be attended with dangerous results.

There is just one more feature of this paper worthy of notice. Page 10 is devoted to special "Requests for Prayer," and some of these "requests" would be, if not so painfully idiotic, most amusing.

For instance, prayer is requested for: rain for India and showers of grace; for the healing of a brother, very ill; that two, partially healed, may be restored; a sister of weak throat and nerves; that a member may get employment where there is no Sunday work; that a cloud hanging over a member may soon be lifted. And so on for four columns. The members of the Pentecostal League must get through a fair share of prayer each day; in fact,

if they confined themselves to prayer only, they would have all they could comfortably manage after deducting time for sleep and meals.

As a financial concern, the League and its organ may pay; but we very much doubt it. The subscription to the League is one shilling, which has to be renewed at the end of each year; and the paper is forwarded, post free for twelve months, at the further cost of eighteenpence. It would be an interesting study to trace these many shillings, because we learn that Evangelists are sent to conduct meetings, etc., anywhere free of charge, except travelling and lodging expenses. Do these worthy Evangelists, then, pay their own expenses, or the churches or chapels where the missions are held?

Religion, at its best, is but a powerful narcotic, and journals of this class may safely be trusted to give us sleep. Their ultimate fate is known to all, but we contend that our candles and like merchandize are worthy of a superior wrapper.

JOHN HAROLD DUOS.

THE CLERICAL FACE.

THE expression of the features depends more upon the moral nature than most persons are accustomed to think. True beauty is in the mind. As the language of the face is universal, so is it very comprehensive. It is the shorthand of the mind, and crowds a great deal in a little room. The strokes are small, but so masterly drawn that you may easily collect the image and proportions of what they resemble. Thus, a countenance habitually under the influence of pure thoughts and amiable feelings acquires a beauty of the highest order, from the frequency with which such thoughts and feelings are the originating causes of the movements or expressions which stamp their character upon it. A man's look is the work of years. It is stamped upon his countenance by the events and thoughts of his whole life, and cannot be wholly effaced.

Priests of the Catholic religion have faces peculiar and common only to themselves, unlike in form, expression, and movement to that of any order of men upon earth. The type is the same everywhere, regardless of both race and climate, showing that the same thoughts, habits, and events leave their universal imprint upon the face. Likewise the clergy of the various branches of Puritanical Protestantism present facial types almost equally distinct and universal. In every human countenance is portrayed the history of the individual.

Cicero wrote: "The countenance is the portrait of the soul." Picture, then, the soul which is depicted in the face of the average Catholic priest, or in that of the orthodox Puritanical fanatic, in both of which the evil and ungentle passions look out so hideous and hateful. We will deal here mostly with the priest face, because it is the most distinct type, owing to the greater antiquity and universality of his religion.

The life of a priest is supposed to be one of piety and holy contemplation. Priests are supposed to possess elegant and polished intellects, sharpened with superior education, and brightened with divine wisdom, which Deity chooses that they alone may safely and truthfully impart to the races of men. They are supposed to cultivate taste, refinement, and the sweetness of a happy and contented mind. They are supposed to keep the heart pure and the soul illuminated by a constant chastisement of the body's appetites. They alone are supposed to direct and show mankind the steep and thorny road to heaven, without ever having a thought themselves of the primrose path. Guarded as they are by all that is sacred in thought and deed, their lives dedicated to personal sacrifice and charitable works, the natural result and expectancy would be to see such lives mirrored in their countenances.

"The face is as legible as a book, and as easy of perusal." The truly pure mind which associates itself with high, mighty, and humane thoughts is never reflected in such faces as those borne by the holy priesthood. Compare the face of Charles Sumner with that of the average Catholic priest; the countenance of Ingersoll with that of Satolli; the countenance of Herbert Spencer with that of Talmage. When priests appear upon the street

beside men of character and pure lives, their faces speak for themselves. Before the public they generally appear sober; but their bloated bodies and red and puffed faces plainly reveal the orgies which high walls and closed blinds daily conceal. Compare the face of the priest with that of the average laity, of equal or less intelligence and education, and observe which reflects the most candor, truthfulness, human kindness, and nobility of soul. It is expected of a man who continually abides in the atmosphere of piety, and in close communion with holy and divine things, that he should at least possess the healthy color of sobriety and virtue. But travel the world over, and the same dissipated and beastly appearance—the result of a sham religious system of beastly license—characterizes them all. A priesthood which will grant unprincipled and vile indulgences will not hesitate to practise the same.

It is noticed that young men studying for the priesthood have a temperate look, are kindly-faced, modest, manly, and frequently of the intellectual type. The start is good; but how quick the transformation when the student life ceases, and they are initiated into the gross indulgences of the priesthood. The kindly and intellectual face soon changes to the coarse, vulgar, and sinister countenance, and the thin, muscular frame to the glutinous and debauched body. "God gives them one face, and they make themselves another." If the education of a priest is truly religious and refining, and his life pure and exemplary, his features and body will present the appearance of a virtuous, refined, and temperate man.

These qualities affect all men alike, and the priest is no exception. Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features. Any meanness or sensuality begins at once to imbrute him. With but few exceptions, every priest has a mean and sensual look, and in their persons fully two-thirds of them present the appearance of marketable swine. Intelligent men and women, as they pass them on the street, instinctively recoil from a religion which is so vulgarly represented in its teachers. Artists have pictured priests, more than any other class of men, and almost invariably associate them with wine-cellars, or in a confessional intrigue with a beautiful woman.

The corpulency of priests is often accredited to their sedentary and celibate manner of living. In striking contrast, however, the same conditions have an entirely different effect upon nuns. It is not a physiological fact that such a difference should exist. The same celibacy, confinement, and incessant devotion upon the part of nuns produce thin bodies, vacant, subdued, pale, thoughtless but temperate faces.

Of all the striking dissimilarities which the same religious conditions impart to the human features, there is none so distinctly marked as that existing between the priest face and the nun face, unless it be, perhaps, that existing between the priest face and the puritanical preacher face. In this instance the worship of the same God and Savior, and the adherence, practically, to the same tenets of belief, have produced two types of countenance, as widely different in cast and expression as exist between any two races of men upon earth. A Dutchman and an Irishman, or a Russian and a Spaniard, or a Chinaman and a Hindoo, are no less distinguishable in feature and expression than a Catholic priest and a Presbyterian preacher. Each is a type distinct unto himself. Just why a similar religious belief and practice, in all save a few matters of form—just why the same exercise of holiness—should produce such contrary facial effects is somewhat a mystery. It cannot be attributed to sedentary habits, for such is the manner of living of both. By some, the difference is attributed to celibacy and fasting on the part of the priest. No one believes this pretension. The priest looks like neither a celibate nor a faster. His appearance belies the claim. The easy means of indulgence with which he carefully surrounds himself further belie the claim. Consequently, this difference chiefly depends upon the variance of the religious habit; and as they worship and pray to the same Divinity, this variance must chiefly consist in the form of worship. The question now arises, Will such differences in the religious habit as exist between the two produce such a marked difference in facial and physical features? Most certainly. If not, why do they exist?

—Free Thought Magazine.

J. B. WILSON, M.D.

(To be concluded.)

CHRISTIAN DEATH-BEDS.

AH! Christian! when your health is good,
You say you trust your Savior;
But when you're ill you change your mood,
And alter your behavior.

In hours of ease, when nought you lack,
You "trust" your heav'nly Father;
But when you're sick, and on your back,
You trust the Doctor rather.

In health, you praise the sovereign creed
Of Christ, the Healing-mystic;
But always in your hour of need
Use science Atheistic.

When well, you prate of Christian "trust,"
But act, when health is breaking,
As Godless unbelievers must,
Your Savior thus forsaking.

Your faith is merely empty speech,
A string of idle phrases;
Like scribbblings on a sandy beach,
Which wind or tide erases.

Your acts are secular throughout,
When sane; but why deny it?
Be honest, Christian! Face about!
The Truth is wholesome! Try it!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

THE Bishop of Rochester appointed Wednesday, March 2, as a day of special humiliation and prayer in his diocese. "Men who have worked in heathen lands," he says, "tell us frankly that for sheer irreligion parts of our own English life are worse than anything in their knowledge." A consciousness of this fact ought to lower the subscriptions to Missionary Societies. But we guess it won't. Missionary Societies are really emigration agencies to relieve the glut of the home clerical market. Every man of God sent abroad to convert the heathen helps to keep up clerical salaries in the country that sends him. See?

Archbishop Temple has again been beating the drum ecclesiastic, with a view to uniting the churches on the question of Sunday-closing. On this the men of God, who keep their beer and wine-cellars, can agree. Though the Archbishop is himself an abstainer, the burglars at Fulham Palace discovered that he had an excellent bin for his visitors on Sundays or other days. "No rivalry on our day" is the motto of these gentlemen. They should be reminded that the mass of drinkers get their modest half-pint on Sunday to drink with their dinner or supper, and that drunkenness is more common in Scotland, where the Sunday-closing Act has long been in force. If there is any force in prohibition, drunkenness might be lessened by closing the public-houses on Saturday evenings, as in Ontario, where they have to be shut up at 7 p.m. We think that, if the women who go in for prohibition were asked to choose between shutting public-houses on Saturday evening or on Sunday, they would vote for the first-named. But this would not suit the men of God, who got the museums opened on evenings when they were not wanted to avoid opening them on the people's day of leisure.

What humbug and hypocrisy there is in this gospel temperance movement! The Church of England Temperance Society is professedly a Society the members of which may imbibe, but must encourage others to abstain. As shown in *Bible and Beer*, the Scriptures praise wine from the time of Melchisedek, who appeared to Abraham bottle in hand, to the prediction of the prophets that every man should have his own grape-tree when the mountains run with wine. Jesus himself had the reputation of being a wine-bibber, and converted an immense quantity of water into wine for guests who had already well drunk.

The following from the *Essex Telegraph* is too delicious for comment: "The troops in Colchester Garrison last Sunday marched into church to the inspiring strains of 'The Good Rhine Wine.' An earnest temperance sermon followed, and the men were played out to the tune of 'Beer, Glorious Beer.'"

According to the Rev. Dawson Burns, our national drink-bill is on the increase. In 1897 it amounted to £152,281,723,

a sum equal to all the rents of all the houses and farms in the United Kingdom, and representing an average expenditure of 3'165 $\frac{1}{2}$ for each man, woman, and child living, as against a sum representing 3'15'6 per head for the previous years. Although statesmen hold that there is no better sign of an increase in prosperity than an increase in the consumption of excisable liquors, it is certain that many would be better off if their expenditure went in another direction. The little progress made by teetotallers ought to make them ask themselves whether their methods are not faulty. They have almost unanimously gone in for prohibition, a counsel of despair. Our impression is that they made more progress when they relied more on persuasion, and on the setting up of counter-attractions to those of the public-house.

It has been contended that it is the gospel temperance people who have helped to make the public-houses attractive, and that in the old days of numerous small beer-shops there was less drunkenness. Then people got their beer, and went away. Now licenses are so restricted the trade has become a monopoly, tending to get more and more into the hands of a few wealthy brewers, who can afford to spend enormously to make their houses attractive. Herbert Spencer has well compared attempts at prohibition to hitting brass in one bulging place, only to make it bulge out somewhere else.

The *Herald of the Golden Age*, a vegetarian paper, says, with regard to J. C. multiplying fishes: "There can be little doubt that in Palestine, 1,900 years ago, fish was a necessity for the population, because the land was not capable of yielding sufficient produce to support them without this addition. We have personally travelled in the Holy Land, and have seen the barren limestone rocks from which the soil has been washed away into the valleys, and its lack is at once apparent." But it contends there is no evidence that Christ ever gave *flesh* to the people, or partook of it himself. How about the Passover Lamb?

Converted murderers are nearly always remarkable object-lessons in the beauty of Christianity, and George William Howe, who was recently executed at Manchester, was no exception to the rule. In his last farewell letter he said: "Thank God, I am fully prepared to meet my end, knowing that my prayers have been answered, and that God will be merciful to me." Then he quoted the verse which he said would be on his mind when he went to his doom:—

Just as I am wilt thou receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe;
O Lamb of God, I come.

George William Howe handed over his wife and family to God's care. He was all right *himself*, and he felt sure God would look after *them*. It was really quite touching until one noticed that he had no word of sympathy or sorrow for the man he murdered, and who was sent out of this world in such a hurry that he had probably no time to get a ticket for the right station on the other side of Jordan. He did make an allusion to the murdered man, and it was quite delicious. Some one had begged him to "make a statement," but this he evaded by saying, "We must forgive those who trespass against us." It is presumable, therefore, that George William Howe forgave the man he murdered. It did not occur to him to wonder whether the murdered man forgave *him*. That doesn't matter when you are booked through to glory.

The Rev. Leslie Cook, a Baptist preacher of Virginia, is under arrest on a charge of forgery. It is also asserted that the Rev. Mr. Cook has two wives.

The Rev. Thomas Moore, who was struck dead while preaching the gospel in his pulpit in Harper, Kansas, was one of the originators of the Salvation Army.

The Rev. Gilbert F. Williams, of Washington, who is being tried before an ecclesiastical court for bastardy, denies his guilt, which the mother of the child very stoutly maintains.

The Rev. Sanford Howard, a Baptist preacher of Lexington, Kentucky, had the misfortune to die in the house of a public woman under conditions reflecting on his morals. At his funeral the officiating clergyman said the angel of the Lord had taken the deceased to heaven, and another preacher ventured to say that few of the congregation were in a position to throw stones at Brother Howard.

The Rev. Charles W. A. Brooke, of Stapleton Hall-road, Stroud Green, who, in addition to being curate of a well-known church in Camden Town, was a candidate for the School Board, has been charged with immorality, adultery, and the writing of a filthy letter. He denied writing the

letter, which, having been wrongly delivered, was the principal evidence in the case.

The wife of the Rev. J. C. Jones, a Baptist minister at Swansea, has obtained a divorce, Sir Francis Jeune stating that the adultery and cruelty had been clearly proved. A more painful and more revolting case it had seldom been his ill-fortune to come across, for the spiritual teacher appeared to have starved his wife, stolen her clothes, and offered her to redeem them if she would prostitute herself on the streets. The petitioner was granted the custody of her child.

The farce of the Zola trial is over, and the Army has won hands down. Were there a General big enough to strike the blow in France, the Republic might be overthrown in a jiffy. The Government has no will of its own; it just obeys the Army and the Mob. And as for the Courts of Justice (heaven save the mark!), they are just as abject as the Government. The judge who presided at Zola's trial permitted a travesty of justice which is a disgrace to civilization. He has also inflicted upon him the heaviest sentence the law permitted. It is all sad and horrible to those who love the France of Voltaire and the Revolution. Nevertheless, it is a comfort to Freethinkers to know that one heroic Freethinker has dared to confront the Government, the Church, the Army, and the Mob, in the interest of justice and humanity; and that other brave Freethinkers have stood by him in his gallant struggle.

All the newspapers agree that if Zola had been acquitted there would in all probability have been a massacre of the Jews in Paris. As it was, the cry of "Down with the Jews" grew into the darker cry of "Death to the Jews." It is positively sickening to see the spirit of Christian bigotry and religious proscription so active in Victor Hugo's "city of light" at the end of the nineteenth century.

Rochefort has once more shown himself in his true colors. He has always been a demagogue, keen to scent the taste of the mob, and reckless in gratifying it. Years ago, before his exile in England, he was in the thick of Boulangerism. Now he is the darling of the Paris mob, who cry "Vive L'Armée!" and maltreat people who cry "Vive La République!" The man who won his journalistic spurs by ridiculing Badinguet is now hand in glove with the military chiefs who lord it over the country for which they have never won a single battle. Militarism has been the curse of France, and may yet be the cause of her annihilation.

Irving Hetherington, an old blind man, has just died at Edinburgh. He read the Bible in the streets for fifty years. What a relief it must have been when he handed in his checks! It is to be hoped there is no Bible in the place he has gone to. The poor old fellow has suffered enough.

Emperor William travels in a royal train that cost £186,000. He is also a devout follower of the Jesus Christ who taught that facetious doctrine, "Blessed be ye poor!"

In the March number of *Blackwood's Magazine* H. M. Doughty has a long article on "Witchcraft and Christianity," which shows how the Bible-sanctioned belief in possession by devils has lasted through the ages. Mr. Doughty says that the Church paltered with the doctrine with a pruning-knife, "which, while it seemed to check, really fostered the growth of it. The doctrine that devils were ever near at hand ready to lend to men preter-human powers to gratify their worst passions, in effect, though indirectly, encouraged sorcery." Heathen sacrifices continued to be offered in secret in this country as late as the thirteenth century. Mr. Doughty shows that the Reformation did nothing to stay the belief in witchcraft. This was the work of rationalism and science.

The *Standard* Moscow correspondent says: "Throughout the vast extent of the Empire of all the Russias the orthodox Church is face to face with heathendom, not as an antiquarian curiosity, a relic, but alive and rampant." Millions of professing Christians who attend the orthodox Church combine their submission to the strong hand of authority, with secret observances, dating back to the bottomless depth of ancient heathendom. "The same may be an 'elder' of the Christian Church, and the secret priest of a faith as pagan as 'Ju-ju.'"

Holy Russia takes such good care of the souls of its people that, when they happen to be born of parents who are heretical, they are taken into other custody as soon as possible. Count Tolstoi tells in *Free Russia* how thirty villagers of the Shelapouti sect were summoned to Ekaterinovka, paraded in front of the officer, and ordered at once to surrender all their children between the ages of two and eleven to be "brought up by pious villagers." One man, the father of a little five-year-old girl, tried to escape. He was caught, and the child torn violently from his arms. He fell

senseless to the ground without a word or sound, and the police officer kicked "the beast" with his boot. How blessed to live under a government which has such regard for true religion.

Now Tolstoi is sixty-eight years of age, and has had ten children, he has a bad opinion of women, and especially of Russian women. Is it Christian-like, he asks, to go to balls more undressed than dressed? The first Christians covered themselves. They did not go naked like the heathen. "I do not," he added to the interviewer to whom these views were confided, "feel well at present, and cannot write just now; but I hope before I die to say a good deal about women. Before my death I shall say everything that I have at heart about them."

Delilah Tails, of Waterloo, Iowa, seems to corroborate Sterne's view of the importance of names. She had an intrigue with her prospective father-in-law, and having resolved to murder him she prayed the Lord to give her strength for the task. Her prayer was answered. Anyhow she killed her man.

There is a city in Ohio bearing the fine old name of Toledo. It has a fine set of old-fashioned Christian preachers. They demand the enforcement of the Sunday laws, and the mayor feels obliged to shut up the news-stands and stop the milk carts. These preachers should arrange matters with the local cows, on the same principle as that of a certain English nobleman who wrote to his steward: "Don't milk the cows for a week. I have a big party then, and want all the cream I can get."

Calcutta is all agog with the occult pretensions of a Madame Bell, who is called "The White Mahatma." Whether by fortune or knowledge, the lady is said to have predicted the winner of the Viceroy Cup, and that the favorite horse would die before the race. Madame Bell now makes a good thing as a consulting oracle.

The Spiritists are arranging for a big demonstration and bazaar at Manchester, beginning on Good Friday, and extending over Easter. This is in celebration of "the Jubilee of Modern Spiritualism." We wonder if there will be any mention that two of the Fox Sisters, from whose rappings at Hydesville the movement is dated, confessed in September, 1888, that they produced the mysterious sounds by cracking their toe and knee joints.

The *Catholic Review* asks the question, "Are there Ghosts?" and answers it in the affirmative. "To deny them," it says, "would be to call in doubt the testimony of all history." Catholic history, of course, is here referred to. Ghosts are by our Catholic contemporary defined as "those souls who, after death, return from another world and appear again upon earth." The testimony is respectfully submitted to our Spiritualist friends for what it is worth.—*Truthseeker*.

A new form of oath. At Cairns recently a Japanese witness of Buddhist persuasion declined to take the oath in the usual manner, and asked for a glass of water. On receiving it he murmured, "If I lie may I die, and be punished." He then sipped at the water and commenced to give evidence. This makes about the fortieth form of hanky-panky used in Bananaland before you perjure yourself.

A request was recently made by the pious Maoris of the North Island that the Diocesan Synod should include King Mahuta's name in the Anglican prayer for the Royal Family! The cloth was horrified, though the daily papers let the disappointed brown convert down easily, merely saying that "the scheme fell through!"—*Sydney Bulletin*.

A revival, conducted by the Baptist, Rev. J. C. Enoch, at Hamlin, Virginia, closed by a crowd going to Ten-mile Creek to witness ten baptisms. After seven candidates had been immersed, Mrs. Kirk, weighing two hundred pounds, went into the stream. The man of God let her slip, and she was drowned. He said she went straight to heaven, but was unkind enough to leave the other two converts unbaptized, and in danger of hell fire.

Number 1,722 of the S. P. C. K. tracts, widely circulated this season, says: "We want a special time for really watching Christ's suffering for us, and that time is given us every year in the forty days of Lent." What a delightful occupation, watching the sufferings of one who was presumably God Almighty, and could not suffer.

Eating fish in Lent used to be considered so pre-eminently Papistical that the Puritans in Queen Elizabeth's time would eat no fish. This is alluded to in *Lear*, act i., scene 4. This anti-Papist demonstration was checked by the Government because injurious to the fisheries, and those depending on them. An Act was passed ordering all households to have

fish at their tables every Wednesday and Friday, a declaration being appended that this law proceeded from no superstitious motives, but from concern for the secular interests of fishermen.

In an article on Methodists and their *fin de siècle* tactics the Glasgow *Saturday Weekly Citizen* remarks: "Just as any sudden change in diet results in a derangement of the bodily functions, so an attempted regeneration of the moral nature throws the emotional and intellectual nature off its balance. The period of conversion is one of unnatural ecstasy, and ecstasy is generally the prelude of reactionary depression. The typical conversion—that of a complete sinner into a complete saint—is a psychological event of the most unreliable character."

The Rev. Samuel Zwemer, a missionary to Arabia, reports to the American Society of Comparative Religions that on the lower Euphrates and Tigris he found people who were star-worshippers, and had a thorough knowledge of astronomy. Their religion is compounded of Christian, heathen, and Jewish elements, and they believe that the stars embody the good of the universe, and the planets the evil. He adds that their moral code is that of the Old Testament, by which he doubtless means that they practise polygamy. The missionary appears to refer to the Mandeans or Sabeans, who have a sacred book they call the Book of Adam.

Mr. Havelock Ellis, in his new volume of *Affirmations*, says: "The religion of Jesus was the invention of a race which itself never accepted that religion. In the East religions sprung up, for the most part, as naturally as flowers, and, like flowers, are scarcely a matter for furious propaganda. These deep sagacious Eastern men threw us of old this rejected flower, as they have since sent us the vases and fans they found too tawdry; and when we send our missionaries out to barter back the gift at a profit, they say no word, but their faces wear the mysterious Eastern smile."

The anniversaries of the birth of the coronation of Leo XIII., eighty-eighth of the one and the twentieth of the other, recall the prediction that he should wear the tiara a quarter of a century, on the strength of which, it is said, Giacomo Pecci confidently looks forward to another five years of rule. He is a wonderful old man.

An American bishop, who was in Rome to present a report of his diocese, was told by the Pope: "You will come again?" "Not," said the bishop, with a certain emotion, "for five years." But the Pope marked the innuendo, and replied, with a sort of rebuke: "I shall be here, and I shall be glad to see you." The Pope's will, as ever, is far more strongly fixed on earth than on heaven, and in this he is not unlike his predecessors.

Mr. F. Gale, in the *Fortnightly*, recalls several stories of Bright, of whom Cobden said: "If he had not been a Quaker, he would have been a prize-fighter." In 1848 he said, on the appointment of a new Bishop of Manchester: "You wanted a new Bishop of Jerusalem a short time ago. How did that holy man go out—with his staff and his scrip like one of the apostles? Not a bit of it; he went out in her Majesty's steam-frigate, *Retribution*, and landed under a salute of eighteen guns, not far from the spot where the apostle lodged with one Simon, a tanner."

Anglican Father Black is again on the war-path. He has discovered that the Archbishop of Canterbury has given his sanction to another marriage of a divorced person. "When will Convocation put an end to this scandal?" asks the ex-Cowley Father. Convocation cannot put an end to it. It has no legislative functions. The bishops are too cute to come into collision with the State on such a ticklish subject as marriage and divorce.

The Church of England is a go-as-you-please institution, in which the only thing absolutely requisite is the cash. At St. Alban's, Holborn, they use a Roman service, unprecribed and unpermitted by the use of Common Prayer. But the Bishop of London, remembering the Mackonochie case, fails to take any notice, or even to answer, letters sent to him on the subject. The anti-Ritualists are, however, determined to bring the matter to a legal test.

In 1885 the Cambridge "Voluntary" Schools obtained a Government grant of £2,373. This had risen in 1897 to £3,776—an increase of 58 per cent. The voluntary subscriptions rose in the same time from £600 to £626—an increase of less than 5 per cent. Even this figure had to be made up by "special donations." What impudence it is to call these Schools "Voluntary." The only voluntary thing we can see about them is the voluntary foolishness of the public which hands over its hard-earned money to be spent by the clerical party in propping up their own power.

The Dutch are having compulsory army services, but the classes who will continue to be exempt are the priests, students in theology, and members of the religious orders. This item of the project is objected to by the Liberal papers, which argue that the candidates for the priesthood should be enlisted in the army like other people, as is the case now in France.

Clement Scott, who insulted every lady of the profession from whom he derives his living, writes in the new Roman Catholic monthly on the functions of a Catholic dramatic critic, and coolly lays it down that anything on the stage satirizing priests, or in any way inimical to Catholicism, should be adversely criticised. We wonder if the Jewish proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* endorse Mr. Scott's canons of criticism.

McNeill, the Scottish Spurgeon, is flourishing. He began life as a railway-porter, but found that sweet Jesus brought more tips than portmanteau-carrying. The churches found it paid to employ him to draw them audiences. He has just found a considerable portion of ground near Kilmalcolm, Renfrewshire, where he proposes to erect a large villa for the use of himself and family.

In the case of the suicide of a newly-married woman at Oxford, she left a note to her husband, in which she bade him good-bye, and asked everybody to pray for her, and added that when she sat down to think her mind was quite gone. The letter was found in a Bible in the Gospel of St. Matthew, where the unfortunate woman, who was twenty-two years of age, had encircled with pencil marks the twenty-eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter, and the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth verses of the seventeenth chapter.

£20 damages has been awarded against the Rev. G. J. H. Llewellyn, vicar of St. Matthew's, Stepney, for slandering a certificated midwife, whom he accused of lending herself to the encouragement of immorality.

The Rev. C. O. Brown journeyed all the way from Chicago to San Francisco to confess that he was a perjurer, an adulterer, and an all-round villain. It was a waste of car-fare, for nobody doubted the fact; but Brown expects to recoup himself by going upon the lecture platform and discoursing on the "Wages of Sin." Brown is one of those clerical humbugs who profess to think that unbelief in Christianity relaxes the moral fibre.—*Truthseeker*.

The Rinderpest returns show that considerably more than half the cattle in Swaziland have been carried away by the plague. In Rhodesia Providence has planted the tsetse fly, which infects and carries off horses, dogs, oxen, and goats.

Sir John Lubbock has gone to the ant again, and if he keeps up his visits, and others imitate him, that interesting insect will become useless for Sunday-school purposes. Sir John succeeded in getting fifty ants helplessly drunk, and then placed them outside an ant hill. The sober ants came out, picked up their friends, and put them to bed to sleep off the effects of Sir John's liquor; the strangers, however, they sternly rolled over into the ditch.

C. D. Wilson, writing on Jewish superstitions, says: "The Jews believe that the Angel of Death is full of eyes, and that when the sick is dying he stands at his head and holds in his hand his naked sword, on which hangs a drop of gall. When the sick person sees the same, he trembles, and opens his mouth. The Angel of Death causes the drop of gall to fall into his mouth, by means of which he dies. When one dies, the Jews empty the water from all vessels in the house and the neighboring ones, because the Angel of Death washes his sword in the water contained in them."

The project for a new bishopric for Sheffield has been deferred, owing to the authorities insisting that a stipend of £3,000 a year shall be provided for the new bishop, instead of £2,000, which had originally been suggested. A lowering of one episcopal stipend might react upon the other overpaid dignitaries.

Zola on Work and Happiness.

Work, I know, does not solve any problem of metaphysics. It is but a rough-and-tumble way of living an honest life, or nearly so. But is it nothing to have good moral and physical health, and escape from the danger of dreams? A man who works is always good. I am convinced that the only faith that can save us is the belief in the efficacy of the accomplished effort. It is very beautiful to dream of eternity; but it is enough for the honest man to pass away, having done his task.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 6, Athenæum Hall, London: 7.30, "Zola's Paris"; 13, Athenæum Hall.
April 17, Huddersfield.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 13, Camberwell; 30 and 31, Debate at Portsmouth. 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.
- SOUTH LONDONER.—The report of the trial and conviction of J. Taylor, anti-Infidel lecturer, for stealing, appeared in the London *Echo* of August 31, 1891. It also appeared in other London newspapers of the same date.
- H. T.—Mr. Foote writes in the *Freethinker* this week on Zola's Trial. His lecture at the Athenæum Hall will be on Zola's *Paris*, which is just published.
- A. J. HOOPER.—Glad you are pleased with our articles on Burns. The edition of the poems you refer to is of no value now. There are good editions at reasonable prices by W. Wallace and Scott Douglas. The Henley-Henderson edition is costly.
- J. STANWAY.—Thanks. Formal receipt in due course. Glad to know that you have "enjoyed the articles on Robert Burns very much."
- H. LEES SUMNER.—Pleased to hear that our article on "The French Trouble" was so appreciated. Accept our thanks for bringing it to the attention of outsiders.
- G. F. DUPLAY.—We have nothing to add. This is said without any sort of discourtesy.
- J. C. M.—Thanks for Spanish papers.
- JAMES CONNOR.—Atheists do not "deny the existence of a supreme being"—with or without capital letters. "Supreme being" is a very vague phrase. When it is defined the Atheist inquires whether it squares with the facts of nature, and if it does not he rejects it. The Atheist does not say there is no god; he says he does not know of one. He cannot deny that of which he has no information. To affirm without information is equally unreasonable.
- R. M. B.—Something stronger would be more acceptable on such a hackneyed theme.
- A. T. (Ramsgate).—Mr. Foote's absence from London is the reason of your letter not being answered last week. We suppose it is too late now.
- A. H. B.—John Stuart Mill died and was buried at Avignon, where his wife was buried some years previously. See Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-beds*. Mill was a Freethinker. He had no positive religious belief.
- THE Paisley Branch secretary writes: "We were highly pleased with your lecture, and also with the results, for we got three new members at the close, which is the first time such a thing has happened with us."
- J. G. BARTRAM.—We earnestly hope the new movement will lead to a vigorous Freethought propaganda on the Tyneside.
- IRISH FREETHINKER writes: "I wonder if it would be possible to stir up Irish Freethinkers a little. A few lectures arranged through the year, or an annual dinner in Belfast or Dublin, ought to bring the Freethinkers together, and there must be a fair number of them in the country. I, for one, would be glad to subscribe my share towards the expenses." Years ago there was a good Secular Society in Belfast, but some of the members broke it up, perhaps unwittingly, by trying to give it a partisan character in politics and sociology.
- F. J. BOORMAN.—Mr. Foote is running free of influenza. His health is first rate.
- H. ORGAN.—Mr. Reader Harris should, as you say, explain the matter more fully, and state whether he met Jesus Christ travelling first, second, or third class.
- T. SEARLE.—Mr. I. Wise, of Kansas, was fined 100 dollars for sending on a post-card the words which may be found in 2 Kings xviii. 27 and Isaiah xxxvi. 12.
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Zoophilist—Heraldo de Madrid—El Correo—Las Dominicales—Progressive Thinker—Berlinische Zeitung—Freidenker—The New Century—Crescent—Liberator—Adult—Literary Guide—University Magazine—Free Thought Magazine—Western Mercury—Witness—Echo.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.
- 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.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.
- It being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.
- 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 lectures this evening (March 6) in the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, taking for his subject "Zola's Paris." This powerful novel was only published on Tuesday. It is well worth the attention of all Freethinkers and social reformers. In one sense it is a profound study in sociology. In another it is a condemnation of Christianity and its social solutions. The *Daily News* praises the work highly, but regrets that Zola relies too much on science and humanity, and ignores the "spiritual nature of man"—which means that Zola is a Positivist, and not a Theologian. This lecture of Mr Foote's should draw a crowded audience.

The Edinburgh Branch has had occasional special lectures in its own meeting-place, but for a long while it has been unable to obtain a suitable large hall well known to the public. This difficulty is now overcome—at least for the present. The Operetta House, in Chambers-street, opposite the University, was secured for Mr. Foote's lectures last Sunday. The local friends worked hard for a success, and are highly gratified with the result. The veteran Mr. Dewar was positively delighted. All these meetings were very appreciative, the fine one in the evening being particularly enthusiastic. Mr. Brown, who occupied the chair on that occasion, in the course of a neat little speech expressed the hope that Mr. Foote would pay them another visit at an early date. This was greeted with a vigorous round of cheers. It has only to be added that there was an excellent sale of literature at the bookstalls, the large supply of the *Freethinker* being unequal to the demand.

We hope the Edinburgh friends will have other lectures in the Operetta House before Mr. Foote visits them again. We understand that Mr. Cohen goes to Edinburgh shortly, and Mr. Watts should be booked when he visits Glasgow. There is plenty of Freethought lurking in the capital of Scotland, which offers a good field for propaganda and organization.

Last Sunday was a cold and very wet day in London, which, no doubt, interfered with Mr. Charles Watts's audience in the evening, when he lectured at the Athenæum Hall. Mr. Harry Brown presided, and said some pleasant things of Mr. Watts, whose birthday it was. At the conclusion of his lecture Mr. Watts said a few words as to his past and future career. The long and hearty applause, renewed again and again, must have been very gratifying to him. Most present shook hands with Mr. Watts, and wished him "Many happy returns of the day."

Mr. Justice Hawkins has set a sensible precedent in the matter of the marriage laws. At the Derbyshire Assizes on Monday last two persons were arraigned for bigamy under the following circumstances. William Bradley and Fanny Bradley were married in 1884, and three months later they separated. Each married again in 1891, and continued living at Grassmoor, near Chesterfield. They pleaded guilty to the charge of bigamy, but Mr. Justice Hawkins refused to pass any sentence upon them. The first marriage, he said, was evidently a case of incompatibility of temperament, and there was no cruelty to justify a judicial separation nor misconduct to warrant a divorce. Not a single discreditable circumstance could be raked up against either prisoner, and although it was said that they were prosecuted in the interests of justice, in the judge's opinion the interests of humanity suggested that they should be left quietly alone.

Samuel Clemens, better known as "Mark Twain," has never concealed his Freethought; and Freethinkers, with other admirers, may be proud of him. He has accomplished what Sir Walter Scott tried to achieve: he has, by his own exertions, discharged the load of debt of a firm with which he was connected, and which he was not bound to take on his own shoulders. That he did so shows his pluck, honesty, and independence.

Eugene Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*, was forty-three years old on February 4. His birthday was celebrated by a number of friends, and his brother George gives a humorous account of the proceedings. We wish both the Macdonalds a good long life of happiness and usefulness, and may the *Truthseeker* flourish more vigorously (we mean in point of circulation) as the years roll by.

The *Free Thought Magazine*, of Chicago, gives, as frontispiece in the February number, the pleasant portrait of Thyra A. Green, "the silent partner" of the editor and publisher. There is a good paper on Paine, by T. B. Wake-man; an account of "The Affirmations of Freethought," by H. Maccay; and a paper on "The Clerical Face" which we extract. It is the editor of the Cincinnati *Free Opinion*.

The *Free Thought Magazine* says of us: "The London *Freethinker* ought to have a very large circulation in this country. If Freethinkers, generally, knew its value, it would have."

Mr. Chilperic Edwards lectured to a good audience at Camberwell on Sunday evening, and the local friends hope soon to hear him again. The Camberwell Branch held its annual Children's Party on the previous Tuesday, when about 300 children sat down to tea, and were afterwards entertained by a magic-lantern show and some clever conjuring and ventriloquist business by Mr. John Warren. Each child went home with a present. This Sunday there is an entertainment for the elders.

Delegates to the North-eastern Secular Federation are requested to note that a meeting will be held on Sunday, March 13, at 3 o'clock, in the Byker Social Club, corner of Roby-street and Parker-street, Byker, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The Newcastle members have arranged to have a tea and social at the same date and place, in order that there may be a general communion of saints. Tickets are ninepence each, and should be secured a week beforehand from J. G. Bartram, 117 Morley-street, Heaton, Newcastle.

Last Sunday the Wood Green Branch had an enjoyable tea and musical evening, presided over by Miss Vance. The entertainment was contributed to by Messrs. Godfrey, Salt, Tyler, Mr. and Mrs. Guest, Mrs. Wheeler, and others; and there were performances by the N. S. S. band, led by Mr. H. Davis. An excellent short address on School Board education was given by Mr. Cowen, a Secularist member of the local School Board, and a message of sympathy was sent to Mr. Truelove, who, we regret to state, is prostrate with bronchitis. This Sunday Mr. Chilperic Edwards will take the Wood Green platform, discoursing on "Ancient Monuments and the Bible."

By special request of the Chatham Branch, Mr. Foote has undertaken a week's Freethought mission at Chatham and New Brompton from Monday, March 28, to Sunday, April 3, inclusive. Three week-night lectures will be delivered in the Gladstone Hall, Chatham, three in the Public Hall, New Brompton, and two in the Secular Hall. Admission on the week-nights will be free, with a collection in aid of expenses.

PIOUS IMPIETY.

ATHEISTS are often absurdly accused of blasphemy against a God in whom they have no belief. Long ago the Pagans, Plutarch and Epictetus, pointed out that the true blasphemy came from believers who fastened human passions and imperfections on the gods; like those who say that "Jehovah loved Jacob and hated Esau," and make out that God the Father required the sacrifice of God the Son, and even after that sacrifice will damn most of his children to eternal torments. Surely, if ever there was blasphemy, it is this. The character of the orthodox God is one which any decent man would be ashamed to own.

In the first place, Jehovah made man out of nothing—created him entirely new. "We are in no way responsible," says the Church, "for our having been created and placed upon this earth." Then is it not the act of a fiend, when he had the opportunity to make man so that it would have been impossible for him to sin or to have fallen, to make him, instead, so wicked and so sinful that the very first man fell? Would it not have been as easy for an *Almighty* God to have created man perfect as to have created him imperfect? Could not God, who had all our destinies in his hand, according to the Church, have made us so strong, have given us enough of his divine essence, of his divine will, of his divine nature, to have prevented us from descending into committing the terrible sins and crimes we have committed? Is it not a blasphemy to say of the divinity which created this world—this beautiful world, and this wonderful humanity upon it—is it not, I say, a blasphemy to assert that our wickedness was made possible by the God who created us out of nothing? Why, he is said to have created the Devil, as well as ourselves. Why should he have done this thing, and why has he surrounded us with all these temptations, when he could as well have kept us eternally in the Garden of Eden? To create man weak, when he could have made him strong; to leave him ignorant when he had it in his power to bestow wisdom, was the act of a fiend; such a deed as not one parent in the world would have done to his own child. Would a man take a beloved child and plunge it into such condi-

tions that it must of necessity become wicked and vile? Would a parent, who really loved his child, make it possible for that child to be eternally lost, when, by the simple exertion of his will, this could be avoided? This contemptible God lets the very Devil, whom he has created, outwit him and take a larger swag to hell than he can draw to heaven. Pulling all the wires, he, nonetheless, punishes his puppets for preordained sins, gives only a few a sanguinary salvation through the slaughter of his own Son, and damns the most for ever and ever.

Then God is such a fickle individual. He can be moved by the prayers of human insects. He is in the New Testament compared to an unjust judge who only avenges a widow "lest, by her continual coming, she weary me." He is ready to give his wind and his rain to those who can pray hardest. He is so vain that he requires constant adulation, and this despicable deity is "wrath" if the tribute of his praises is withheld. Christians, who laugh at the pretensions of the savage medicine-men, yet keep in their prayer-book prayers to the immutable for rain, and invoke his special aid to slaughter their enemies.

"The real blasphemers," said Mr. Foote, when under an indictment for blasphemy, "are those who believe in God and blacken his character; who credit him with less knowledge than a child, and less intelligence than an idiot; who make him quibble, deceive, and lie; who represent him as indecent, cruel, and revengeful; who give him the heart of a savage and the brain of a fool. These are the blasphemers."

L. W.

THE GROWTH OF PRIESTCRAFT.

FROM time immemorial religion has existed, and all forms of it have proceeded from the same source. The savage lived in a state of almost complete ignorance, being little better than the other beasts, and, as a natural corollary, that which has since played so important a part in the world's history was born. Primitive, or natural, religion was founded on fear, and its successive developments have not yet found a securer basis. Our ancestors were slaves of superstition. They knew not what caused the great struggle for existence which makes destruction, perhaps, the most prominent phenomenon of nature, and their weak intellects could not puzzle it out; but they used what little reason they had to solve the enigma. They knew that they could sometimes save themselves from their enemies by supplication and gifts, and, therefore, thinking that all the hurtful manifestations of nature were directed by personal agencies, they used the same means to propitiate the unseen demons. This natural instinct of the animal to seek safety by submission to the destructive power became, in the course of time, the source of many ills. Superstition, bad and degrading, but comparatively harmless when unorganized, is, when developed into a system, extremely noxious. The medicine man, or holy juggler, is the direct forerunner of the priest. A clever man, who could persuade his more ignorant fellows that he was high in the favor of the deities, would soon become the object of their reverence, and the recipient of the gifts formerly supposed to be taken by the gods. The business paid, otherwise it would not have been engaged in; and it pays to-day. Thus did priestcraft originate.

It is only when we find men advanced beyond the savage state that we see the above tendency well developed. A priestly caste can be traced far back into the dim shadow of history, in almost every system we consider, with few exceptions. Sometimes, as in India, where the caste system reached its greatest growth, we find that only men of a certain station could be priests; elsewhere, any vagrant or miracle-monger could obtain a following, and recognition as a "holy" man. But, notwithstanding all minor differences, all sacerdotal swindlers have considered themselves as superior to, and apart from, the crowd. Perhaps the first followers of a new system were in earnest, and believed that they really did stand between God and man, as mediators and mouthpieces. But their successors must soon have realized that it was all a gigantic fraud. Nevertheless, the fraud paid too well to be given up. Special privileges, honors, wealth, control of thrones and mobs—all these were not lightly to be abandoned from any feelings of honor or truth. And so the blasting influence was perpetuated. The honest were outnumbered.

Sacerdotal tyranny once firmly established and supported by an interested class, there soon grew up a great abuse of power. To take only the best known instance: The Roman Church, having usurped authority over the others, and having succeeded in organizing its priestcraft on the basis of servile obedience, and zeal for the Bride of Christ, set out to control men in all the affairs of life. The emperors resisted her attempts to interfere in temporal affairs, but their power was too much scattered to prevent her triumph. With the height of the Roman rule occurred the deepest mental night. Ignorance is the state most zealously preserved by the religious controllers of the mob, and Rome has always succeeded in keeping her people more ignorant than any other class, and that is why she is so full of life to-day.

Many phases of the growth of priestly power are too long to be treated except in separate articles; but the main facts are these: Priestcraft is interested in preserving itself, in keeping the people blind and unintelligent, in defending holy books and systems, and in persecuting unbelief. Anything which disturbs the tranquillity of the pack of wolves in sheep's clothing sets them howling for the blood of an Infidel with which to scare the flock into submission. Thus organized superstition has always ruled, thus it works to-day, and thus it will continue until the people become so free from ignorance that they cannot be gulled by impositions, and then priests will turn their attention to something honest and manly for a living, when it is found that preaching no longer pays.

—*Boston Investigator.*

THE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE.

THE most obstinate and opinionated adversaries of the principle of utility are those who plant themselves on what they call the religious principle. They profess to take the will of God for the single rule of good and of bad. This is the only rule, say they, which has all the characteristics required, which is infallible, universal, sovereign, etc.

I answer that the religious principle is not a distinct principle; it is one or other of those of which we have already spoken, presented under another form.

What is called the will of God can be only his presumed will, seeing that God does not explain himself to us by immediate acts and particular revelations. Now, how does a man presume the will of God? After his own. Now, his own particular will is always directed by one of the three principles before spoken of. How do you know that God does not wish such or such a thing? "Because it would be prejudicial to the happiness of mankind," answers the partisan of utility. "Because it contains a gross and sensual pleasure which God reproveth," says the ascetic. "Because it wounds the conscience, because it is contrary to natural sentiments, and because one ought to detest it without permitting himself to examine it"—such is the language of antipathy.

But revelation, some one will say, is the direct expression of the will of God. There is nothing arbitrary in it. It is a guide which ought to rule over every human mind.

I shall not answer indirectly that revelation is not universal; that among Christian peoples even many individuals do not admit it, and that there is very necessary some common principle of reasoning among all mankind.

But I do say that revelation is not a system of politics nor of morals; that all its precepts must be explained, modified, limited each by the others; that, taken in the literal sense, they would overturn the world, annihilate self-defence, industry, commerce; all reciprocal attachments; that ecclesiastical history is an incontestable proof of the frightful evils that have resulted from religious maxims wrongly understood.

What a difference between the Protestant theologians and the Catholics, between the moderns and the ancients! Paley's system of evangelical morals is not that of Nicole. That of the Jansenists was not that of the Jesuits. The interpreters of the Scriptures are divided into classes. Those of the first have for their rule of criticism the principle of utility; the second follow asceticism; the third follow the confused impressions of sympathy and of antipathy. The first, far from excluding pleasures, give them as proof of the goodness of God. The ascetics are

mortal enemies of them; if they permit pleasures, it is never for the pleasures themselves, but only in view of some necessary end. The last approve or condemn pleasures according to their whims, without being determined by their consequences. Revelation is not, then, a principle in itself. One can give this name (principle) to that which needs not to be proved, and which serves to prove all the rest.

H. P.

LINCOLN'S OPINIONS.

THE *Truthseeker*, of New York, in giving a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, thus summarizes his religious opinions:— In regard to a Supreme Being he entertained at times Agnostic and even Atheistic opinions. During the later years of his life, however, he professed a sort of Deistic belief, but he did not accept the Christian or anthropomorphic conception of a Deity.

So far as the doctrine of immortality is concerned, he was an Agnostic.

He did not believe in the Christian doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures. He believed that Burns and Paine were as much inspired as David and Paul.

He did not believe in the doctrine of Christ's divinity; he affirmed that Jesus was either the son of Joseph and Mary, or the illegitimate son of Mary.

He did not believe in the doctrine of a special creation.

He believed in the theory of Evolution, so far as this theory had developed in his time.

He did not believe in miracles and special providences; he believed that all things are governed by immutable laws, and that miracles and special providences, in the evangelical sense of these terms, are impossible.

He rejected the doctrine of total, or inherent, depravity.

He repudiated the doctrine of vicarious atonement.

He condemned the doctrine of forgiveness for sin.

He opposed the doctrine of future rewards and punishments.

He denied the doctrine of the freedom of the will.

He did not believe in the efficacy of prayer as understood by orthodox Christians.

He endorsed, for the most part, the criticisms of Thomas Paine on the Bible and Christianity, and accepted, to a great extent, the theological and humanitarian views of Theodore Parker.

He wrote a book (which was suppressed) against the Bible and Christianity.

His connection with public affairs prevented him from giving prominence to his religious opinions during the later years of his life, but his earlier views concerning the unsoundness of the Christian system of religion never underwent any material change, and he died, as he had lived, an unbeliever.

TO ZOLA, ON HIS TRIUMPH.

Thy judges, not thyself, now stand condemned;
Zola, thou fearless champion of the Right;
The imprisonment in which they now are hemmed
(Their souls shut up in their own grovelling night)
Knoweth no term, but over them holds sway
Until they utter their last lying breath;
Until they writhe in ignominious death,
No generous pulse can give them holiday—
These coward souls who fear Justice and Light of Day.

WILLIAM PLATT.

Obituary.

It is my painful duty to record the death of Mr. Robert Lowther, on the 20th ult., at the advanced age of seventy-three. For fifty years he was connected with the Free-thought cause in and about Newcastle-on-Tyne. In compliance with his request, I attended and read the Secular Burial Service at the grave-side. It was my privilege to be personally acquainted with him for many years. He was unswerving in his convictions to the last, and always kind and polite. He loved and fought for liberty with all his heart, and hated every form of slavery, both mental and physical. As a man he was a true friend; as husband and father, sympathetic and tender; and a Freethinker who went to sleep with the consciousness of having done his duty.—THOS. BIRTLEY.

WE regret to record the death (news of which has only just reached us) of Samuel Seal, of London and Brighton. Mr. Seal was a liberal subscriber to the Free-thought movement. His death occurred on January 16, and his remains were cremated four days later. Deceased was a vigorous Freethinker to the last. Many advanced causes have lost a generous friend.

BOOK CHAT.

A SPANISH priest has lately written a book on *Barbarous Europe*, which has episcopal sanction. He claims that Spain, with its torture of Montjuich prisoners, is still to the forefront in civilization, and that Protestant countries are full of barbarism. While in England he attended races and fox-hunts, and witnessed awful cruelty to animals. "At a meeting of a hunting party he saw a lady feeding dogs with dainties, while a half-naked boy, in a starving condition, stood by, mutely entreating for food." Some one suggests that to see a half-naked boy you must take a trip to Catholic Ireland. "The theatre," says our priest, "is far more demoralizing than the bull-ring." This is "as others see us" with a vengeance. One who knows Spain well says: "The fact is, that all the great evils of the day, that are to some extent controlled in England, exist in full force in Spanish cities—long hours, seven days per week, poor pay, poor food, horrible dwellings, no protection to working women or girls, hideous crimes and vices, gambling everywhere; no charities or benevolent societies; no schools to absorb the class most likely to grow up vicious, but cruelty everywhere."

Mr. Dobell's catalogue of books always makes us wish we were wealthy enough to snap up some of his bargains—as, for instance, the first English edition of Giordano Bruno's *Spaccio*. But we can, without money and without price, cut out a little gem—one of Mr. Dobell's own:—

LILY'S ANSWER.

As on my cosy couch I lay
Methought I heard an Angel say:
"Dear little child, come up above;
Here all is peace, and all is love!"

But I replied: "Good Angel, no!
I cannot leave my parents so;
And brother Frank and sister May
Would weep if I should go away."

He answered: "Here we live in joy;
Grief comes not, nor does pain annoy;
Care from our realm has taken flight;
There's nothing here but pure delight."

I pleaded: "Let me stay awhile
To see mamma's proud, loving smile;
Should I your realm of bliss attain,
I think she'd never smile again!"

"The pains and griefs I have to bear
My parents, brother, sister, share;
So all my cares and troubles pass
Like shadows over waving grass."

"Indeed, I'm very happy here,
With home so pleasant, friends so dear:
Earth's warm and comfy; in your sky
I'd be a stranger—so Good-bye!"

As a sequel to his *Tales from the Bible, Told to My Daughter*, Mr. F. J. Gould has written *Tales from the New Testament*. Mr. Gould says in his preface that his first aim was "to make my young readers understand the Gospel." His next aim "was to open to them, if possible, the natural charm of the early Christian legends. I have therefore not scrupled to take away, or to add, or to modify details so long as I could thereby bring out the genuine spirit and human value of the narrative." Certainly Mr. Gould has endeavored to bring out, or put in, some human value, but whether he has evoked the genuine spirit is far more questionable. The Jesus of Mr. Gould seems to us a totally different person from the Jesus Christ of the early Christian writers, only using some of the same language. In point of fact, he is Mr. Gould's Jesus, just as the Herakles of Browning's *Aristophanes's Apology* is Browning's, with but the foundation of the old legends. Of course the test of such a book as this is, not how it strikes a critical reader, but how it suits the children for whom it is designed.

The Rev. W. J. Dawson, writing in the *Young Man*, attributes to that good man Stead the responsibility for the sex impressionism and salacious tone which have pervaded fiction during the last decade. He traces it all to Mr. Stead's *Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon*.

Mr. Havelock Ellis's *Affirmations* is a companion work to his volume on *The New Spirit*. He writes of Nietzsche, Casanova, Zola, Huysmans, and St. Francis with appreciation, for, though so diverse in their views, they have the note of frank veracity.

The Press and the Post Office, by the Rev. C. Bullock, is issued by the Press Postal Reform League, which urges that all printed matter, whether papers, magazines, or books, should be charged by weight.

The *Adult* for March contains a note from Mr. Grant Allen, who does not consider the time propitious for discussion of the subjects to which this magazine is devoted. He says: "I have determined for myself to be silent on this topic till I see signs of reviving interest; indeed, I am holding back a long novel written three years ago."

The *Academy* is unmeasured in its praise of Mr. J. G. Frazer's *Pausanias*, and says he "has performed single-handed a feat of research and scholarship which compares with Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*."

The idea of the similarity of the alleged crucifixion of Jesus Christ with the mock putting to death of a scapegoat, pseudo-king, or carnival king, suggested by Mr. Frazer in his *Golden Bough*, and supported in Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past*, receives some corroboration in a notable article entitled "Jesus als Saturnalien König," by Paul Wendlandt, in *Hermes*, the Standard German magazine of classical studies. Herr Wendlandt seems to take the Gospel narratives as historical, but points out that the mock crowning, clothing in purple, etc., were part of the usual masquerade at Saturnalian feasts. Obviously, the stories are susceptible of another interpretation than the historical—viz., that to the legendary Christ was attributed the treatment yearly accorded to the divine representative scapegoat.

Zola's *Paris*, translated by G. Vizetelly, is sure of an enormous circulation. The hero is Jacques Froment, the Liberal Catholic, whose reason was outraged at Lourdes, and whose illusions were dissipated at Rome. Needless to say, his faith comes to utter shipwreck at Paris. The volume is a scathing satire which will derive fresh force from the treatment of its author. The work would be quite pessimistic but for its hope of a future when reason will prevail over superstition, and science and sympathy triumph by the sure but slow process of evolution.

The *University Magazine* opens with an article on "Max Müller's Creed," by Adam Gowan Whyte, B. Sc., who shows how heretical the great philologist is. Dr. Park writes on "The Will to Believe," in reply to Dr. Janes. Mr. J. M. Robertson has two papers, one on "The Structure of *Hamlet*," the other in reply to some criticisms of his ablest pupil, Mr. Ernest Newman. There is an article on "Irving" by Agnes Platt; and a study of "Actors' Mania," by Allan Laidlaw.

CORRESPONDENCE.

POTIPHAR v. POTIPHAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In my opinion, the case of Potiphar v. Potiphar was decided upon far too feeble evidence. For instance, who was the chief witness for the prosecution? One Joseph, a flunkey. Now flunkeys, probably from their persistent apeing of the manners of correct society, are about the dirtiest-minded class alive; and, in the second place, their inordinate vanity tempts them ever to believe their mistresses to be in love with them. So Joseph was, at any rate, well in the running to exaggerate anything he might fancy he saw in Mrs. Potiphar, and make a long and loathsome story out of it. But, supposing that she had encouraged him, the details of her favor would be known to her and him only; and, if they got further circulated, it would be through the tattling of one or the other. Now, she was in no way likely to speak, and if he did, then he was the most despicable cad who ever stepped; so that, anyway, his word was utterly unreliable, and at the best he was the meanest character in the show. Poor Mrs. Potiphar, I admit, broke down rather under the cross-examination; but, after all, does that not rather prove her modest disposition? Only a brazen hussy could keep countenance before the nasty-tasting questions asked in such cases; a decent woman would be sure to show confusion. My private opinion is that Joseph really made the overtures to her, and, being refused, took a vile revenge. Anyway, I'd stand by the woman, even if it were proved to the contrary.

AURIA.

REINCARNATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Since hearing a lecture on Theosophy I have been studying natural history, especially in relation to parsons. The conclusions to which I have come are, that sky-pilots are reincarnations of blackbeetles, and that crows are reincarnations of parsons. Does Buddha say anything on this point?

DYHANI CHOHAN.

EPISCOPAL ANECDOTES.

SOAPY SAM, sitting next to a lady at the table, asked her : "Do you know what is the greatest trouble a bishop has?" All sorts of answers were suggested, and at last the prelate said : "The greatest trouble a bishop has is to keep his napkin from slipping down over his silk apron when he is at dinner!"

It is said that the Bishop of Newcastle once tried the Haroun-al-Raschid business, and went to a mining district disguised in well-worn clothes. A pitman—his fellow occupant in a third-class carriage—viewing the Bishop's clerical but "seedy" garments, remarked : "I'se warrent ye're a poor curate, noo, travelling wi' the likes o' huz?" "I once was, my friend," replied the Bishop, "but—" "Oh, ay, I see," cried the other, "that wretched drink! Ay, ay. Too bad."

A venerable and pompous Christian bishop was having his portrait painted, and, after sitting for an hour in silence, thought he would break the monotony. "How are you getting along?" he inquired. To his astonishment the artist, absorbed in his work, replied : "Move your head a little to the right and shut your mouth." Not being accustomed to such a form of address, his lordship asked : "May I ask you why you address me in that manner?" The artist, still absorbed in his work, said : "I want to take off a little of your cheek."

There was a storm blowing, and the steamship rolled a little. "Captain," said the nervous colonial bishop, who was returning homeward after the Jubilee, "Captain, do you think we are in any danger?" The Captain looked grave. "The way the men are swearing in the engine-room is something shocking; do they know their peril?" whispered the bishop. "I can assure your lordship," said the Captain, "that the men wouldn't as much as whisper an oath if there were any danger." The sea grew rougher. Half an hour later the bishop might have been seen listening to the men's voices over the gangway. "Thank heaven," he murmured, "they are at it still."

THE SONG OF THE FATHER CONFESSOR.

"It is never permitted to inquire into the details or circumstances of sin confessed."—MR. B.

Now, we priests ain't made according to
Vile human physiology :
We're a special species—twiggey-vous ?—
Unclassed in anthropology.
No details lewd excite our chaste auricular,
We don't crave food nor—anything particular.

If a wife commit unwifely sin,
Yet doesn't like confessing it,
We respect such coyness feminine,
With questions ne'er distressing it.
Our upright souls maintain their perpendicular—
We simply ask—h'm—nothing in particular.

If a maiden do a deed to rue,
And doesn't all about it tell,
D'ye think we wonder "when" or "who,"
Or question her how out it fell?
No! no! we simply bend our shocked auricular,
And ask her—well—er—nothing in particular.

When a nun, by fast and prayer, is wrought
Into a state ecstasical,
O, my brothers! how we priests are fraught
With sad rebuke emphatical!
No thought unholy finds our minds vehicular,
We simply—well—er—nothing in particular.

O, we're saints divine, divinely free
From human love's intensity;
Girls are safe with us—e'en such as be
Of amorous propensity.
So send them to confession; 'tis auricular,
But then, we ask them nothing—h'm—particular.
EX-RITUALIST.

The Paisley Branch held its first Annual Supper in the Globe Hotel on Tuesday evening, February 22, when there was a good turnout of members and friends (Mr. Watt, President, in the chair). The toast of the N. S. S. was proposed by Mr. Lelland in a few appropriate and well-chosen words, and replied to by Mr. Paton, of Greenock, in an able and excellent manner. The rest of the evening was spent with songs and recitations, which brought a very enjoyable evening to a close in the usual manner.—ROBERT SKONCE, Secretary.

THE YOUNGSTERS.

"MAMMA," said Flossie, who was admiring herself in the glass, "did God make me?" "Yes, dear," replied mamma. "Well," was Flossie's dictum, after a pause, "I guess he needn't be ashamed of the job."

Sunday-school Teacher—"Now, who can tell me why Satan was cursed? Hold up your hand." Dave—"Cause he told the truth."

Timothy—"Say, ma, did our baby come from heaven?" Ma—"Av coorse he did." Timothy—"Well, he was a fool to leave heaven for a place like this, and run the risk of never gettin' back again."

"Who led the people of Israel out of the wilderness?" asked the Sunday-school superintendent, fiercely, as his eyes rested for a moment upon a new scholar. "I wasn't me," replied the little boy; "my folks jest moved out here from Bristol last week."

Mother—"Johnny, you said you'd been to Sunday-school." Johnny (with a far-away look)—"Yes'm." Mother—"How does it happen that your hands smell fishy?" Johnny—"I—carried home th' Sunday-school paper, an'—an' th' outside page is all about Jonah and th' whale."

Clergyman—"How did Jacob know that it was Joseph sending for him from Egypt?" Small Boy (excitedly)—"He seed 'is name on the waggons."

Teacher (to village school children)—"Now, why do I take all the trouble to leave my home and come over here and speak to you thus? Can any boy tell me?" Bright Child (innocently)—"Please, sur, p'raps yeow loikes to 'ear yourself taak, sur!"

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

Freethinker—"You say the Bible is inspired by God. How do you define inspiration?"

Christian Evidencer—"What have you got to put in place of the Bible?"

F.—"How do you distinguish between an inspired and a non-inspired book?"

C. E.—"You'll know when you come to die."

F.—"Can contradictions be inspired by a perfect being?"

C. E.—"You Infidels are Atheists in disguise."

F.—"Can you explain how it is that miracles do not happen now?"

C. E.—"Christ says, 'He that believeth not shall be damned.'"

F.—"Did not Christ also say that believers should speak with new tongues, take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them?"

C. E.—"I wouldn't trust my purse with an Atheist."

F.—"Would Atheistic wickedness prove the Bible inspired?"

C. E.—"Yes, the fool hath said in his heart there is no God."

F.—"How do you define God?"

C. E.—"Where are your hospitals?"

(The Freethinker retires crestfallen.)

PROFANE JOKES.

ONE of the converts at the holiness meeting went up to an old maid at church the other night and asked her if she was "ready for the bridegroom." The old maid informed him that she was ready now, and had been for the past forty years.

"What I has to put up wid," said the Rev. Whangdoodle Baxter, "wi' three hundred and fifty debbils in my church!" "How does you make dat out, Bruddeh Baxteh?" "Why, don't you know yeh Bible? I thought you knowed it fun de Garden ob Eden to de New Jerus'lem. Hab'n you read how de Lawd Jesus Chris' casted sebben debbils outen Ma'y Magdalum?" "Yes, Bruddeh Baxteh." "Well, did you ebber read dat he casted 'em outen any odder woman?" "No." "Well, den, all de udder women's got 'em yet, an' fifty come to my church las' Sunday."

"Ah, dear Brother Groaner, how fluently our blessed pastor discoursed on Balaam and his ass." "Yes, Brother Cantwell, I could fancy I heard him talking."

Bush Missionary—"Are there any Presbyterians in this part of the country, my good woman?" The Good Woman—"I don't know—I don't think my husband ever shot one, but if you'll wait I'll ask him." Bush Missionary does not wait.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Zola's Paris."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, A. B. Moss, "Shelley, the Poet of Progress."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, A lecture; 7, Concert and dance.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion, "State Socialism and Individual Morality," opened by Miss Alice Law; 7, Stanton Coit, "John Ball's Rhymes and Fourteenth-century Socialism."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (381 Harrow-road, W., near Westbourne Park Station): March 8, at 9, Half-yearly general meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Stanton Coit, "John Ball and Fourteenth-century Socialism."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, Chilperic Edwards, "The Monuments and the Bible." March 10, 8.15, Leonard Smith and W. Heaford, debate, "Is Christianity or Secularism the Better Calculated to Promote the Higher Interests of Humanity?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

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

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner—11, "Crime: Its Cause and its Punishments"; 7, "A Little Englander's Look Round."

CARLTON AND NETHERFIELD: March 7, W. Heaford, "The Story of Jesus: Is it True?"

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Phillip Broham, "Matter and Motion."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class; 6.30, Social meeting in commemoration of Mazzini.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): Anniversary Sunday.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen—3, "Woman—Past, Present, and Future"; 7, "The Case for Secularism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Hushoime-road, All Saints): H. P. Ward—11, "The Story of G. W. Foote's Imprisonment for Blasphemy"; 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Byker Social Club, corner of Raby and Parker-streets): 7, A. Arstad, A lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Heaford—11, "Religion and Revenge"; 3, "The Historical Basis of Christianity"; 7, "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, W. Cook and R. Chapman, debate, "The Outcome of Legitimation."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—March 6, Liverpool.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—March 6, Bradlaugh Club. April 10, Mile End; 17, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 24, a., Victoria Park. May 1, m., Finsbury; 8, m., Mile End; 15, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 22, m., Mile End.

H. PERCY WARD, 6 Wawne Grove, Alexandra-road, Hull.—March 6, Manchester; 13, Birmingham; 20 and 21, Sheffield. April 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 10, Stockton-on-Tees; 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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