

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVIII.—No. 15.

SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 1898.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## CHRISTIAN IGNORANCE.

DR. GERALD H. RENDALL has just published through Macmillan & Co. a new edition of the Meditations of the great emperor and moralist, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. There hardly seemed room for another translation after the masterly one of the late George Long, and we confess that we have not yet been able to go through Dr. Rendall's production. What we are going to write about in this article is a gross display of "smart" ignorance in a review of the book in last week's *Literary World*, which is a sort of companion to the well-known *Christian World*. The following paragraph is the one we intend to criticise:—

"In his admirable and minute diagnosis of the Emperor's character as revealed in the meditations, and as exhibited in history, we are a little surprised that Dr. Rendall should so entirely have ignored his relation to Christianity. That under the noblest of Roman Emperors the Christians should have fared worse than under the rule of the vilest, and that the principles of Christianity which must have been known to him, if only in the Apologies which Justin Martyr addressed to his father Antoninus, failed apparently so signally to impress that mind so athirst for truth and goodness, are psychological problems on which Dr. Rendall's scholarship might here have been exercised with entire appropriateness and much profit to his readers."

Dr. Rendall may have his reasons for not discussing the Emperor's relation to Christianity. Nearly all the alleged information is derived from Christian sources, and is too full of self-contradiction and manifest falsehood. Even a Christian scholar, of the modern school, may well hesitate to trust himself on such a quagmire. Marcus Aurelius only speaks once of the Christians, and then disparagingly, as persons of no judgment but great obstinacy. "He knew nothing of them," says George Long, "except their hostility to the Roman religion, and he probably thought they were dangerous to the State, notwithstanding the professions, false or true, of some of the Apologists." "I add," he says, "that it is quite certain that Antoninus did not derive any of his Ethical principles from a religion of which he knew nothing."

The *Literary World* critic, however, assumes the contrary. He says that the principles of Christianity must have been known to the Emperor. But the reason assigned is ridiculously inadequate. There is much looseness, to begin with, in the statement that Justin Martyr's "Apologies" were addressed to the Emperor's father, Antoninus Pius. The first Apology is addressed to Antoninus Pius and his two adopted sons; the second Apology is addressed to the Roman Senate, though Long peremptorily states, as though the matter did not admit of any reasonable dispute, that "this superscription is from some copyist." Even with respect to the first Apology, Long curtly says "we do not know whether they [the addressees] read it." For our part, we think it highly improbable. Orosius, in a far later age, when Christians could say anything with impunity, declared that Justin presented his Apology to Antoninus Pius. But this is doubtless fudg. Justin's was a kind of "open letter," as we call it now, and stood just as much chance of reaching the Emperor as an "open letter" by some Socialist would stand of reaching the Czar of Russia—or say an open letter by some obscure Republican to Queen Victoria. Evidently, then, the "must" of the *Literary World* writer is a bit of critical impudence. There is no "must" in the matter, and all the probabilities are in favor of Long's opinion that Marcus Aurelius knew

nothing of Christianity, except that it was a turbulent sect of the Empire.

If it were true that Marcus Aurelius was well acquainted with "the principles of Christianity" it would certainly be a pretty problem for the Christians to settle. Here was one of the wisest and best of men; not a mere closet student, but one tried in the conduct of great affairs; yet he spoke of the Christians but once, and that once with disdain. Why was this, if Christianity be the noblest, purest, divinest religion that ever adorned the earth? Nor is this all. The attitude of Marcus Aurelius towards Christianity was not peculiar. The only true religion, as the Christians call it, never made a single convert among the statesmen and philosophers of the Empire for three hundred years. To call even the best of the Fathers "philosophers" is a mere abuse of language. It was not until Christianity was made the State religion by Constantine, in the fourth century, that really distinguished men enlisted in its service. And that single fact throws a flood of light on the method of religious conquest.

Now for the alleged persecution of the Christians by the great philosophic Emperor. What are the facts? For long afterwards the Christians themselves asserted, with constant iteration, that Marcus Aurelius protected them. They even went to the length of forging a letter from him, sometimes printed after Justin's first Apology, in which he is made to say that if there is nothing against an accused man except that he is a Christian, he must be set free; indeed, the forger made him add the monstrous and incredible order that the informer in such a case was to be burnt alive. Tertullian, in his Apology to the Roman Senate, perhaps on this very ground, affirmed that Marcus Aurelius "threatened to punish with death those who ventured to accuse us." Eusebius, in the fourth century, takes the same position. Against this we have the alleged "martyrdoms" of Justin and Polycarp. But these fanciful narratives are very untrustworthy, and if there is any truth in them it merely shows that the Christians were hated by Pagans and Jews, and that they sometimes fell victims to the popular fanaticism in distant parts of the Empire. There is not a shred of evidence that Marcus Aurelius personally harassed the Christians or sanctioned any special decrees against them.

One thing is certain; the Christians were mad after "martyrdom." They simply begged the Pagans to kill them. "They longed," as Cave says, "to be in the arms of suffering." It was their opinion that dying in this way for Christ was the certain means of obtaining a heavenly crown. Such people must have given a great deal of trouble to the government. They were even condemned by the more sober members of their own party. Gibbon tells us how one magistrate drove a crowd of fanatical Christians from his tribunal, asking them whether there were not ropes and precipices enough if they wanted to die.

John Stuart Mill unfortunately gave currency to this libel on Marcus Aurelius. He knew next to nothing (as Professor Bain admitted) of the true history of Christianity. What he did was to take the "fact" that Marcus Aurelius was a persecutor, in order to impress upon his readers the danger to the best of men in neglecting the great principle of liberty. Such a "fact," of course, grows as it rolls along the course of time, and now we have an anonymous critic in a reputable journal declaring that the best of Emperors was a greater persecutor than the "vilest."

G. W. FOOTE.

## EASTER.

It is as natural that the resurrection of vegetative life from the underworld should be celebrated by a festival as for seeds to germinate, sap to rise, and buds to open. When the crocus lifts up its cup for morning dew, and primroses peep from lovely leafy bowers, when daisies dapple the turf, and daffodils unfold, the heart rejoices that the alchemy of sunlight has changed the dull, dead earth into the flowers that bloom in the spring. Every bird piping on its bough, or preparing the nest for its progeny, proclaims the promise and potency of renewed life. Each spring an added lark song should carol in the heart, expanding as the foliage spreads out its fan, absorbing the sunshine, and radiating its beauty like the flowers.

*Easter* expresses its meaning in its name. It comes from the east, the place of the sun's rising, the dawn. The venerable Bede derives the word from "Eostre" (the Northumbrian spelling of *Eastre*), the name of the dawn-goddess, whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox.\* The fourth month, answering to our April, was dedicated to her and called *Eostur-monath*. The Scandinavians celebrated the feast long before they heard of Christianity, and our Teutonic forefathers retained the name instead of adopting the Roman *Pascha*. The holiday gathered up many memorials as it flowed down the stream of time; but the essential factor has been with Northern nations the death and departure of winter and the renewal of life in spring.

There is no trace of Easter in the New Testament. The passage in Acts xii. 4 is a mistranslation of *πάσχα*—*Passover*. 1 Cor. v. 7 has been erroneously supposed to refer to an apostolic observance of Easter, but the injunction to "purge out the old leaven" refers unmistakably to *Passover* usage.

In the East the vernal equinox—to us the beginning of the new life of the year—is the commencement of the summer, when the sun is beginning to parch the grass and dry the wells. Then the firstling of the flock was sacrificed, and its blood sprinkled over the gates of folds and the entrance of tents that the evil spirit might pass over. The Jewish *Passover* is the celebration of a nomad pastoral people, bearing clear traces of pre-existent savagery.† When Christianity spread there were long and even bloody feuds in the Church respecting the celebration of Easter. The old party, taking their time from the moon, and regarding it as the symbol of renewal, held that, as a substitution for the *Passover*, Easter was a lunar celebration falling on the fourteenth day of the first moon. The later and victorious party, who adopted solar reckoning, maintained that it must ever be held on the day of our Lord, the sun. It was a remnant of the same old feud of wandering shepherds and settled agriculturalists which we find symbolized in the story of Cain and Abel.

If Easter, instead of being a nature festival, celebrated the death and resurrection of a real person, it would be at a fixed, not at a moveable, date. The man who stole the saucepan, and made a new lid, took care that the lid fitted. But the Christian lid put on the old Pagan saucepan does not fit. The adjustment of the date sufficiently shows the astronomical character of the feast. It must be near the spring equinox, after a full moon, and on the day sacred to the sun; the circumstance proves that the Church compromise had no reference to alleged historic facts, but to the reconciliation of various views of nature worship.

In Easter customs may be traced many ancient pre-Christian rites. As I have dealt with them fully in *Footsteps of the Past*, I here only briefly mention the symbolism of the egg and the killing of the god. Modern science, seeking to explain life, takes us back to the microscopic cell. Earlier knowledge was content with the observation that life sprang from eggs. The egg thus became the symbol of vitality, and spring eggs were the sign of renewed life in nature. Dyed eggs were sacred Easter offerings in ancient Egypt.‡ A form for blessing Easter eggs is found in the Ritual of Pope Paul V.

A more savage faith was represented in the belief that death was necessary to life. The custom of placing food with the dead led to the plants which sprang from the seed being regarded as embodied spirits, and the idea that

a corpse was necessary for cultivation. Hence tree worship and sacrifices to promote agriculture, the victim being identified with the god. Dr. J. G. Frazer, in his *Golden Bough*, has traced many instances and survivals of an annual killing of a deity of vegetation incarnate in a man whom it was necessary should be put to death while in the full bloom of manhood, in order that his sacred life might renew its youth, and perpetually reincarnate itself fresh and young; and in my *Footsteps of the Past* I have shown reason for thinking that this custom lies at the root of the Christian myths concerning the crucifixion and resurrection. It is significant that every good Catholic at Easter is bound to take communion—that is, to eat the body of his slaughtered god on the annual spring festival of reviving vegetation. To the student of custom this as plainly takes us back to the more savage rites as the buttons at the back of a gentleman's coat recall the time when swords were worn and coats buttoned back for handiness in getting at them.

Easter comes to us an ancient heritage, laden with myriad memories, extending back to the dark barbarism of the past. Old festivals and customs link us to the fathers who have passed away and the children who will follow. They serve to tell of the slow progress of mankind in sloughing off its superstitions. Let us, then, put aside all in them that is monstrous and absurd, while preserving all that is true; retain the beautiful, but reject the base.

Falsehoods which we spurn to-day  
Were the truths of long ago;  
Let the dead boughs fall away,  
Fresher shall the living grow.

If we drop the paltry, unrepeatable thaumaturgy of a Jerusalem ghost, we can yet rejoice in the perpetual re-appearance of life from the gloomy tomb of winter. If we cease to worship a dead god, we may still find scope for all our devotion in serving a living humanity.

J. M. WHEELER.

## PROTESTANT INCONSISTENCY.

THE proverb that "consistency is a jewel" conveys a lesson which all should accept and profit by. Inconsistency is one of the great drawbacks of our age, and nowhere is it more manifest than among certain professors of Christianity. They avow beliefs which they never even attempt to put into practice, and they boast of virtues to which they are practically strangers. Last week in these columns we pointed out that Roman Catholicism had been, and still is, a determined obstacle to the intellectual advancement of the community. It is thought by many persons that a similar charge cannot be truthfully urged against Protestantism, which was initiated in the sixteenth century. It would, indeed, be a blessing to mankind if such were the fact. But, unfortunately, the two—Catholicism and Protestantism—are of the same family, and although the latter, which is the younger member, has, through its acceptance of the principle of *Freethought*, forsaken many of the early traditions, still its history has been marred and its actions degraded by the retention of some of those very evils which have made the Catholic Church a curse to individual and national welfare.

What is termed the Protestant Reformation was but a rearrangement of the same theology which had so long dominated Christendom. It was not the uprise of a new religion, but simply a change of tactics in reference to the then existing faith. For instance, it substituted the authority of the Bible for that of the Pope, and the clergy assumed the functions of the priests as dictators to the laity. The cruel spirit of persecution was retained and enforced towards those who differed from the expounders of the new form of faith. Private judgment, as interpreted by the Reformers, meant *their* judgment, and the very men who protested against the domination of Rome sought to fetter and impede the progress of those who desired to carry out the true philosophy of individual judgment. In his *Essays on the History of the Christian Religion* Earl Russell, who was a devout Protestant, writes: "The fault of Luther was that in the very beginning of this mighty contest he attempted to erect a new church, to cover it with something like infallibility,

\* *Temp. Rat.*, xv.

† See "The *Passover*" in *Bible Studies*.

‡ Bonwick's *Egyptian Belief in Modern Thought*, p. 24.

and to defend it by persecution" (p. 188). Hallam also remarks: "We must not be misled by the idea that Luther contended for freedom of inquiry and boundless privilege of individual judgment." Draper is equally emphatic in his work, *The Conflict between Religion and Science*, wherein he states: "The fatal maxim, that the Bible contained the sum and substance of all knowledge useful or possible to man—a maxim employed with such pernicious effect of old by Tertullian, and by St. Augustine, and which had so often been enforced by Papal authority—was strictly insisted upon. The leaders of the Reformation, Luther and Melancthon, were determined to banish philosophy from the Church..... So far as science is concerned, nothing is owed to the Reformation" (p. 215). Dr. Andrew D. White also writes: "Justice compels me to say that the founders of Protestantism were no less zealous [than the Catholics] against the new scientific doctrine of astronomy." Said Martin Luther: "People gave ear to an upstart astrologer, who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or firmament, the sun and the moon..... This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy. But sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun, to stand still, and not the earth. Melancthon, mild as he was, was not behind Luther in condemning Kopernik" (*The Warfare of Science*, p. 30).

It must not be supposed that this retarding spirit of the Protestant faith was manifested only by the founders of the Reformation. The same opposition to progress has been shown throughout its history down to almost the present time. There is not one great measure of modern reform that has not been opposed by the Protestant Church. In 1847 the members of this Church denounced the Scotch physician, Sir J. Young Simpson, because he advocated the use of chloroform at childbirth, which the Christians said would "avoid one part of the primeval curse on woman." In 1864 the Protestants declared publicly against researches into scientific facts, upon the ground that it "cast doubt upon the truth and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures." In 1868 the Protestants of Prussia joined in the open condemnation of science; and in England we know that at a later period such scientists as Lyell, Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley met with the greatest opposition they had to encounter from the Protestant clergy. With respect to geology Dr. White observes: "Strange as it may at first seem, the war on geology was waged more fiercely in Protestant countries than in Catholic" (*Warfare of Science*, pp. 116, 117). The truth is, theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, have ever been the deadliest foes to the progress of science. As Sir Archibald Geikie put it in his address delivered to the British Association at Edinburgh in August, 1892: "For many centuries the advance of inquiry into such matters [scientific researches] was arrested by the paramount influence of orthodox theology." It "helped to retard inquiry, and exercised in that respect a baneful influence on intellectual progress." If Protestantism has now become less active in its opposition to science than it was in former times, it is because it has yielded more to the legitimate force of Secular Freethought, which inspires faith in, and reliance upon, the potency of nature, rather than dependence upon some supposed supernatural power.

It has been found a general result in history that, when the false has been opposed only by the partially true, error has seldom been successfully combated. Thus we find that the Protestant Reformation was, in many instances, a complete sham, inasmuch as it limited mental freedom to its own narrow view of personal liberty. Having won the right to think for themselves, the Protestants denied the same right to others who could not share their opinions. To them ecclesiastical bondage was a burden too heavy to be borne, yet they tried to enforce it upon those who were more advanced towards true liberty than themselves. They rightly objected to the dictation of the Pope, but they set up their notion of what the Bible taught as infallible. They justly demanded freedom from persecution for following the results of their own reasoning, and yet they cruelly persecuted others who did the same thing. They repudiated tradition as a basis of human conduct, while they endeavored to enforce a rule of life that had no other but a traditional foundation. Hence their inconsistency robbed their protest of that vitality which was necessary to remove those evils which for centuries had retarded the progress of the world. This fault recoiled upon themselves, for it not only caused internal dissent,

which culminated in the formation of numerous conflicting sects, but it divided the original Protestant Church into three antagonistic sections. There is the "High" Churchman, the Ritualist, who dislikes all science, and who panders to the weakness of mankind; there is the "Low" Churchman, who is intolerant of all doubt, and impervious to all secular reform; and there is the "Broad" Churchman, upon whom theology has but little influence. Now, if it be true, as stated in the New Testament, that "if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark iii. 25), then the Protestant Church is doomed. And signs are not wanting that this is the case, for its original character is gone, many of its leading doctrines are abandoned, and its alleged "spiritual" power has become practically *nil*. Such is the fate of a sham Protestantism—a fate it rightly deserves as a punishment for its incongruity, hypocrisy, and bigotry.

Protestants, to be consistent, should condemn *all* persecution for disbelief. In the name of Protestantism the Church has fettered some of the noblest intellects, and stifled some of the purest thoughts, thereby retarding the advancement of civilization. Against this we protest. Liberty for all is the precursor of human happiness, and the right to differ is the emblem of real personal freedom. These are the essentials of true Protestantism, and they constitute the forces which contribute to a nation's welfare.

CHARLES WATTS.

### SUBJECTIVE PRAYER.

WHEN is the religious world to be supplied with forms of subjective prayer? That is one of the questions—if not exactly one of the needs—of our time. The old forms of prayer are useless—worse than useless—in view of the new ideas which are coming into vogue. We do not pray now-a-days as we were wont to pray. We soliloquize.

Prayer, it seems now—whatever we may once have thought it—is designed, not to influence the Deity, but to influence ourselves. It is not so much entreaty as self-communion, not so much a petition as the expression of an ideal. We do not pray to inform God of our needs, because he knows them already. We do not pray expecting that he will change his plans in our behalf, because he is unchangeable. We address ourselves ostensibly to him, because we are told he desires it; but it is only a devotional exercise, the effects of which begin and end in ourselves.

Supplications for temporal blessings are not to be too greatly encouraged. We may ask for spiritual blessings with a better prospect of success. They are intangible, of doubtful quantity, depend very much upon the state of our minds, can be evolved from our own inner consciousness, and are great or small according to the degree of religious ecstasy or hysteria from which we may happen to be suffering at the time. In a word, prayer is purely subjective. Obviously, then, it becomes the duty of the propounders of this modern doctrine to frame some special prayers to meet the requirements of the case. What sort of compositions will they be?

The Book of Common Prayer, which for generations people have been carrying to and from church, is, according to this view, hopelessly obsolete. The prayers for rain, for fair weather, in times of dearth and famine, in times of war and tumult, for our daily bread, for defence against the perils and dangers of the night, for the preservation of those at sea, for the recovery of the sick, for the Royal Family, for Parliament during the session, for the Lords of the Council and "all the Nobility," are out of date, because they apply to merely temporal needs, and imply the expectation of answer from without. They may be used as indicating that which we should like, but we are by no means to suppose that we are going to get it. If God thinks it is good for us, he will give it; if he don't, he won't. And really we should frame our prayers with a view to those higher spiritual things which will come to us in the prayers themselves.

All of which is a beautiful fining down of that old absurdity, Prayer, which the age has inherited, and hardly knows what to do with—a chipping away of an old stumbling-block that cannot at present be bodily removed.

It is, perhaps, but a trifling defect in this latter-day

theory of prayer that it is entirely unscriptural. Nothing can be more violently in opposition to the teachings and narratives of Old and New Testament alike. Is it necessary to say that in the Bible there are repeated instances of prayers and answers to prayers, of injunctions to pray, and of promises that prayers shall be heard, and that what is asked shall be given? There is no distinction drawn between temporal and spiritual blessings; no limitations such as pulpiteers, in deference to advanced scientific thought, now deem it advisable to impose; no suggestion that the believer is to do all the work himself—to pray and answer his own prayer—to be, as it were, at both ends of the telephone at once.

The compilers of the Book of Common Prayer knew what they were about as far as following Scriptural examples and injunctions was concerned. Now-a-days we find Christian ministers tacitly setting the Bible aside, and ignoring its plainest teachings, in the vain attempt to reconcile Rationalistic thought to irrational doctrine.

It is impossible, however, to believe that thoughtful minds who have discovered insuperable difficulties in the ordinary doctrine will find any satisfaction in what is, at best, but a flimsy and farcical pretence at prayer. Is it possible, with any earnestness or sincerity, to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," while the mind is devoid of any expectation that, in consequence of such appeal, bread will be given? In like manner, all petitions, whether arising from spiritual or physical needs, must be empty phrases, which will in time be mechanically employed, unless there should be in their prompting a strong personal conviction that they will be listened to and answered—not in the man and by and of himself—but by the Being to whom they are addressed.

If prayer is merely subjective, in what way is the supplication of the Christian more efficacious than that of the savage to his idol? It is on the same level in its nature and results, with the probable difference that there is a preponderance of faith on the side of the savage. If prayer is subjective, one might as well pray to Jove or Zeus, or Mumbo Jumbo, as to God. The hollow echoes will be all the same.

The Rev. T. Teignmouth Shore, Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the Queen, disposes of subjective prayer in his work on *Some Difficulties of Belief*. He shows that it fails to remove the difficulty which people find in ordinary prayer. He urges that "whatever we may feel to be the influence of prayer upon ourselves surely comes from our faith that prayer is heard and answered by God, and grows stronger or weaker as that aspect of prayer increases or diminishes. Moreover, is the influence which prayer has upon us a sufficient motive to lead us to pray? Has it been so? If it could be proved that the effect of prayer is only thus subjective, would not our petitions be robbed of all their earnestness? Would not the fervor of worship disappear? Would not prayer cease to be prayer in any deep and true sense of the word?"

Undoubtedly it would become mere soliloquy—a species of self-communion which, divested of theological color, has its occasional uses, and its fascination for dreamy minds, though likely enough to pall on earnest, ardent spirits, whose disposition is rather to seek salvation in action than in idle apostrophes or monologue entertainments.

It is a sad thing for the Christian mythology that all attempts to rationalize it end in miserable and grotesque failures. Subjective prayer is but one farcical instance out of many.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### A DREAMER OF THE GHETTO.

A BOOK of dreamers, not wholly out of season, must needs be the record of much that was abortive, out of place, and equally out of time. The lamp, we shall find, of many ideals shattered in the dust; "idealists, doomed to see themselves worshipped and their ideas rejected"; exultation there will be; agonies of the heart and brain, and the passionate outcry of souls in torment. Such stuff, indeed, as dreams are made of.

Such a book is *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, Israel Zangwill's latest; a book as strikingly distinguished from the wilderness of theological hotch-potch, new novels, and verse in a minority, as fact is above fiction. Yet fact it is not, for

indeed it is fiction—fiction of an order rare enough in our tongue to merit the commendation of all persons honorably concerned for our literature. Some amendment of phrase, however, is needed; for, in the sense of execution, this is not recent work. I well remember the appearance, two or three years ago, of a certain chapter, "Joseph the Dreamer"; and in a subsequent Christmas Annual lighting upon a second instalment in the form of a short story; moreover, a later section—that relating to Heine's death-bed, *The Mattress Grave* entitled, appeared, I have reason to believe, in a recent number of *Cosmopolis*. But to the generality of readers there is no doubt very much of the volume will prove new. I do not know how many have read it; certainly most people have reviewed it, though I make no excuse thereby for what I have to say on the matter. Mr. Henley has reviewed it; you have read his eulogy in the *Outlook*; Mr. Courtney has gone over the facts in the *Daily Telegraph*; Mr. Archer, I think, has added his word; and, finally, Mr. L. F. Austin has penned a column in the *Star*. Praise they could scarcely withhold; Mr. Henley admits that it goes far to explain the Jew; the critic of the *Telegraph* is concerned with odd scraps of Jewish ritual; Mr. Austin finds in it a powerful stimulus to individual thought. They have revelled in contrasts between "The Savior of the People" and "Tragic Comedians"—that striking masterpiece of George Meredith's genius; they have considered the Jew, in short, as belonging, by virtue of tradition and practice, more properly to the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Money-lending. Sir George Lewis on Mr. "Sam" Lewis is an apt example of the attitude of English criticism towards the Jew of Mr. Zangwill's imagining. There have been so many such reviews as to make it easy to believe that reviewing is the greater part of literature. The better part of reviewing, however, is criticism; yet, so far, none has appeared. The author, in an ironic moment, opines that the whole history of Judaism finds its culmination in the "comic" paper of to-day; he also reflects that, if Zionism were successful, a Jewish state in Palestine would be expected to perform the obligation of safeguarding the "divine curios."

All these things are nothing to me. I have read every line I. Zangwill ever wrote, which is something; but a certain short story—the finest, I think, in the language—a story for which I would cheerfully barter a whole library of accepted masterpieces; I have read that story, and that, to me, is everything. I read it in a Christmas number of the *English Illustrated Magazine*, and I have read it many times since. The story is of a dreamer of the Whitechapel Ghetto, a Jewish mystic, one Zussmann, who had a beautiful German, Hulda, for wife. He has written a book to prove that Christendom is all wrong about the tragedy of Calvary; it was not the Jews who killed Christ, but Herod and Pilate. "Our realm is spiritual," he says. "Nationality—the world stinks with it! Germany for the Germans, Austria for the Austrians. Foreigners to the Devil—pah! Ego mania posing as patriotism. Human brotherhood is what we stand for." And he calls his work *The Brotherhood of the Peoples*. He is a shoemaker by trade, and the room in which Zussmann thinks and works is one of two rented from a Christian corn-factor, who owns the hovel. "Even so shall humanity live!" says Zussmann, as a tiny, flaxen-haired babe stares at him from its cradle fastened to a piano-organ that grinds enlivening airs in the frowsy avenue of Brick-lane. A pathetic, half-comic figure is his trusty employee. He was called the Red Beadle because, though his irreligious opinions had long since lost him his synagogue appointment, and driven him back to his old work of bootmaking, his beard was still ruddy. "There is nothing but nature!" he quotes hopelessly, basing his Rationalism on the facts of life, and not to be crushed by high-flown German words of the master bootmaker. The tragedy of the Red Beadle's life is, that he cannot make friends with the Christians, and so is cut off from both. His Yiddish is bad, and his English worse; yet he bribes a local editor into issuing an Englished version of *The Brotherhood of the Peoples* through the medium of the Ghetto paper. This takes place in a frowsy public-house, where the little journalist, "nocturnally infringing the Sabbath," is taking meat after his labors. Him the Red Beadle plies with whisky, finally extorting one page of the coveted English version to bind the contract. This, when it is finished, he snatches up, and staggers forth to find Zussmann. Outside is a nightmare of fog; the streets are

heavy with slush, for snow has fallen during the day. Yet he stumbles on drunkenly; "he only knew in some troubled, nightmare-way that he must take that page to Zussmann."

Meanwhile Zussmann's transcendentalism has proved his material downfall. He has been excommunicated, and the big manufacturers have withdrawn their patronage; Hulda is at the point of death, and they are starving. But the Idea must win. Fifty copies of the book have been published, and several, forwarded to the wealthy Jews resident in London, have been returned. The Red Beadle finds Hulda on the verge, but, with a glimpse of the Idea in its miraculous English garb, she accepts the inevitable. Zussmann cries to her on the brink that the Idea wins. Later the drunken Beadle finds Zussmann at the window looking up at the stars. That is all—but the hand of the master!

We all know I. Zangwill; the witty Ariel, the unprejudiced reviewer, most brilliant of journalists. But here, I conceive, we have the man at his best, the Poet of the Ghetto—freed from theological trammels, aloof from scholastic complexities: an artist—a very great artist—almost a genius.

J. HAROLD DUOS.

### AN ARRAIGNMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

WHAT has Christianity accomplished for the world? is a question susceptible of two radically diverse answers, according to the standard of thought of the person interrogated. Put this query to a Christian, and he will tell you that his religion has raised us out of the darkness of Paganism and idolatry into the glorious light of truth and wisdom; that it has lightened the sorrows of millions during life, and with its glad tidings of future joys allayed their fears when they were about to pass through the gloomy portals of death; that it has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, sheltered the oppressed.

A truly orthodox son of the Church will be extremely careful to divulge no facts which would tend to cast opprobrium upon his faith, and will insist that, without Christianity, human progress would have been well-nigh impossible. A very superficial acquaintance with history will reveal to us that the Christian closet contains a skeleton which it were better for the good of the cause to keep hidden from the broad glare of day.

From the moment that Constantine mounted the throne the future of Christianity was assured, and it was free to promulgate its doctrines with fire and sword. The Church declared that the Bible contains all the knowledge necessary for man to acquire, and any dissenter from this view was immediately branded as a heretic.

The co-eternity of the members of the Trinity, the geocentric theory of the universe, the doctrines of original sin and predestination, the miraculous conception, the vicarious atonement, the location of heaven and of hell, are but a few of God's mysticisms which have caused the fair earth to be steeped with the blood of innocent humanity. Christians may argue that the persecutions of the past arose from a misinterpretation of the Bible; but was not God, when he inspired its "holy" pages, aware that such would be the case? Divines will point with horror to the stoning of Stephen by the mob; but do they ever allude to the far more brutal murder of the noble Hypatia by the wretched emissaries of St. Cyril? Christianity has ever been, and still is, the deadly enemy of thought. Thanks to the dissonances of the numerous factions which have been formed from its God-given textbook, it has no longer the power of exercising judicial authority for the support of its worm-eaten dogmas; but its principles remain the same, its plagiarized story of creation is still disseminated, and its puny chronology remains unrevised.

Yes, my God-fearing brethren, you may anathematize the Infidel if you will; you may crouch in the path of progress, and sigh for the good old days when the scaffold and the stake were the emblems of your faith; but you are harmless; your teeth have been drawn, and you can do nothing but snap and snarl as the mighty wave of intellectuality sweeps onward to engulf your musty tenets and make room for a firmer, more substantial structure than your narrow philosophy has dreamed of.

Toleration is a word unknown to the Church. The moment that a new discovery is made in the world of science, a hundred theologians are busily engaged in reconciling it with the Bible. The noble truths evolved by

geology, biology, astronomy, and kindred sciences, have been tortured by the Church into what she fondly supposes to be conformity to the word of God. Four hundred years ago such attempts at reconciliation were needless. Catholicism, its power still virtually unbroken, reared its hideous head to enslave the intellect, and the Reformers were equally on the alert to crush the unfortunate mortal who cherished pretensions to a higher knowledge than was to be found in the Scriptures. The work of Copernicus denounced as heretical by the Congregation of the Index; the immortal Galileo compelled to curse the doctrines he had labored so long to establish; Bruno imprisoned for years, and at last burnt for asserting the plurality of worlds; Servetus roasted by the bloodthirsty Calvin because of his belief in an enlightened form of Pantheism: this is the way in which science has been received by the Church—with sword and brand—and, had she but the power, she would to-day employ the same potent arguments.

LEMOYNE BENJAMIN.

—Truthseeker.

### THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

In a recent number of *Open Court* Mr. Moncure D. Conway pointed out a similarity between the story told in 1 Kings iii. and some Buddhist stories. One tale is that of Visakha, related in a translation of the Kah Gyur by Schufner and Ralston, and published in Trübner's "Oriental Series." Visakha was son of a prime minister of the King of Kosala. A Brahman recommended him a bride, also named Visakha, because, when bathing, while other girls took off their clothes, Visakha lifted her dress by degrees as she entered the water. Besides showing decorum, this maiden conducted herself differently from the others in everything, some of her actions being mysterious. The Brahman, having contrived to meet her alone, questioned her concerning these peculiarities, for all of which she gave reasons implying exceptional wisdom and virtue. On his return, the Brahman described this maiden to the prime minister, who set forth and asked her hand for his son, and she was brought to Kosala on a ship with great pomp. The maiden then, for a long time, gives evidence of extraordinary wisdom, one example being of special importance to our inquiry: she determines which of two women claiming a child is the real mother. The King and his ministers being unable to settle the dispute, Visakha said: "Speak to the two women thus: 'As we do not know to which of you two the boy belongs, let her who is the strongest take the boy.' When each of them has taken hold of one of the boy's hands, and he begins to cry out on account of the pain, the real mother will let go, being full of compassion for him, and knowing that if her child remains alive she will be able to see it again; but the other, who has no compassion for him, will not let go. Then beat her with a switch, and she will thereupon confess the truth of the whole matter."

"In comparing this with the famous judgment of Solomon," says Mr. Conway, "there appear some reasons for believing the Oriental tale to be the earlier. In the Biblical tale there is evidently a missing link. Why should the false mother, who had so desired the child, consent to have it cut in two? What motive could she have? But in the Tibetan tale one of the women is the wife, the other the concubine, of a householder. The wife bore him no child, and was jealous of the concubine on account of her babe. The concubine, feeling certain that the wife would kill the child, gave it to her, with her lord's approval; but after his death possession of the house had to follow motherhood of the child. If, however, the child were dead, the false claimant would be mistress of the house. Here, then, is a motive wanting in the story of Solomon, and suggesting that the latter is not the original."

In the ancient "Mahosadha Jataka" the false claimant proves to be a Yakshini (a sort of siren and vampire), who wishes to eat the child. To Buddha himself is here ascribed the judgment, which is much the same as that of the "wise Champa maiden," Visakha. Here, also, is a motive for assenting to the child's death or injury, which is lacking in the Biblical story.

Whether Solomon imported ivory, apes, and peacocks from the East or not, there seems good reason to believe that the Bible writers did not scruple to adopt some Oriental tales.

## CHRISTIANITY AND WOMEN.

THE feeling that prevailed towards woman is illustrated by the story of a monk who was travelling with his mother, and, coming to a stream which he had to cross, he wrapped his hands in cloth, lest in conveying her across the water he should touch his mother, and thereby disturb the equilibrium of his saintly nature.

A law of Justinian prohibited parents from restraining their children from entering monasteries. Exhorted by the fathers, multitudes of women adopted the ascetic life. Some of the Fathers wrote treatises to show that those who entered monasteries contrary to the wishes of their parents were more worthy than those who did so unopposed by parental authority. St. Chrysostom said damnation awaited those who should attempt to prevent their children entering the institutions.

Practised with no object except to make sure of a place in heaven, the effects of this asceticism must have been very injurious on the general character of its devotees.

The estimate of woman was very low in the Christian empire. "Woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed of the very thought that she is a woman. She should live in continual penance on account of the curses she had brought upon the world. She should be ashamed of her dress, for it is the memorial of her fall. She should especially be ashamed of her beauty, for it is the most potent instrument of the demon. . . . Women were even forbidden by a provincial council, in the sixth century, on account of their impurity, to receive the eucharist in their naked hands. Their essentially subordinate position was continually maintained."

"It is probable that this teaching had its part in determining the principles of legislation concerning the sex. The pagan laws during the empire had been continually repealing the old disabilities of woman, and the legislative movement in their favor continued with unabated force from Constantine to Justinian, and appeared also in some of the early laws of the barbarians. But in the whole feudal legislation women were placed in a much lower legal position than in the pagan empire. In addition to the personal restriction which grew necessarily out of the Catholic Christian doctrines concerning divorce, and the subordination of the weaker sex, we find numerous and stringent enactments, which rendered it impossible for women to succeed to any considerable amount of property, and which almost reduced them to the alternative of marriage or a nunnery. The complete inferiority of the sex was continually maintained by law; and that generous public opinion which in Rome had frequently revolted against the injustice done to girls, in depriving them of the greater part of the inheritance of their fathers, totally disappeared. Wherever the canon law has been the basis of legislation, we find laws of succession sacrificing the interests of daughters and of wives, and a state of public opinion which has been formed and regulated by these laws; nor was any serious attempt made to abolish them till the close of the last century. The French Revolutionists, though rejecting the proposals of Siéyès and Condorcet to accord political emancipation to women, established, at least, an equal succession of sons and daughters, and thus initiated a great reformation of both law and opinion, which sooner or later must traverse the world" (*Lecky's History of European Morals*, ii., 348-340).

"No society," says Maine, "which preserves any tincture of Christian institutions is likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by the middle Roman law" (*Ancient Law*, 158).

—*Dominion Review*.

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

## Jonah's Activity.

Unbelievers have often told us that the story of the prophet swallowed by a great whale was an absurdity. They say that, so long in the stomach of the monster, the minister would have been digested. We have no difficulty in this matter. Jonah was an unwilling guest in the whale; he wanted to get out. However much he may have liked fish, he did not want it three times a day and all the time. So he kept up a fidget, and a struggle, and a turning over; and he gave the whale no time to assimilate him.—*Dr. Talmage, "Around the Tea Table," p. 112.*

## ACID DROPS.

THE Pope is not to arbitrate between the United States and Spain, after all. We thought from the first that the report was somewhat farcical. Of course, there are a good many Catholics in America; still, they are only nine millions out of seventy, and most of them appear to belong to the Democratic party. America is not a Catholic country, for all the vaporings of the priests over there.

Canon Scott Holland, preaching in Berkeley Chapel, Mayfair, on Thursday evening, March 31, made the following remarkable admission: "The outlook in Europe never presented so wholly un-Christian a spectacle since the days of Constantine. Even in mediæval days peace, and not war, was regarded as the normal condition of men. Now nations were watching one another like wild beasts in a jungle, and Christian Europe had armed itself in defiance of everything which Christ came to teach. Blood and iron rule; huge camps and seas crowded with horrible ships of war met the eye at every turn. Men scrambled for land, and the question was who should be first in the race." This is accurate enough. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true. But doesn't Canon Scott Holland see that it demonstrates the failure of Christianity?

Spain has 80 per cent. of its rural population illiterate, and its schoolmasters' salaries are about three years in arrears. While money is lavished on the priests, churches, and bull-fights, the schoolmasters get on an average 500 pesetas, or less than £20, yearly. There are about 10,000 of them, and the amount of salaries due to them and unpaid is over fifteen million of pesetas. Truly Freethought is much needed in most Christian countries.

The Spanish press are sensitive to English opinion on its Montjuich tortures and its bull-fights, and the *Nacional* is able to retort that nothing is said against the sickening exhibitions which take place every year when Her Majesty's buck-hounds meet under the shadow of the royal residence at Windsor, and under the guidance of their noble master torture an unhappy deer. Then follows a detailed account of a scene that happened during the present hunting season, when the deer was impaled and disembowelled near Surly Hall. "This is by no means an exceptional case," says the *Nacional*. "Yet year by year the Royal Buck-hounds meet, and the position of Master is looked upon as one of the most honorable of Court appointments." Why will the Queen persist in allowing this cruel "sport"? And where, oh, where, are "the clergy"?

It is amusing to watch the antics of some of the High Church party. They want to take the money of the Establishment, and to do just what they please afterwards. There is the Rev. Morris Fuller, for instance, of St. Mark's Church, Marylebone. This gentleman was ordered by the London Consistory Court to remove the "Stations of the Cross" he had placed round his church, also a crucifix over the entrance to the chancel, and cloth coverings over the Commandments. He was also ordered to take away certain window coverings that were used to make artificial light a necessity in the day time. But these orders were not complied with; and, on the reverend gentleman being cited to appear again, he pleaded that no time was prescribed, and said he was therefore suiting his own convenience. Dr. Tristram told him that he knew very well, or ought to know, that the order was to be obeyed "forthwith." He gave him a week to come to his senses, at the end of which time, if he had not removed the objects complained of, they would be forcibly removed by other hands.

When will the High Church party learn that the "perfect spiritual freedom of the Church" is incompatible with its alliance with the State? Disestablish and disendow the Church, and the clergy can then gratify their own fancies—that is, if they can get people to shell out the necessary cash on the voluntary principle.

The Catholic *Month* has a lively and clever skit on the career of Mr. Kensit, the publisher of several defunct papers attacking Freethought, as well as the leading light of the Protestant Truth Society. The writer deals with the financial position and management of Mr. Kensit's Society in a very sarcastic spirit. The same worthy, it is said, is caricatured in *Paul Mercer*, a Ritualistic Socialistic novel by James Adderley, under the name of "Scenit," who denounces "the thurifers hanging from the ceiling, and the acolytes swinging in front of the reredos."

The Duke of Newcastle has outraged Mr. Kensit's sensibilities by offering to provide censers to a certain number of churches who desire to use them. As, however, the use of censers has been held to be against the law, the Duke has made himself party to an illegality. At least, so say the anti-Ritualists.

More churches than ever are to be decorated this Easter. It reminds us of the Shakespearean parody which appeared in *Punch* before that publication had a Roman Catholic editor:—

Hark, hark, the clerk the service sings,  
The candlesticks arise;  
We'll soon have water from the springs,  
In salted fonts that lies.  
And winking Marys' heads begin  
To ope their canvas eyes;  
With everything that Roman bin:—  
My good John Bull, arise.

As a set-off to the bogus drawings of the Crucifixion found at Rome, we have the information that a stone chest containing the personal effects of Gautama Buddha has been unearthed in the Basti district of India. Possibly these are as genuine as the Holy coat at Trèves and the other relics of Jesus Christ and the Apostles distributed through the churches of Europe.

The *Christian World* sees a sign of progress in the fact that Father Keane, of Minneapolis, has offered up prayers for the repose of the soul of Frances E. Willard, who was a Protestant. Well, it is progress in a way. But what a religion Christianity must be when such a goose-stride takes two or three hundred years to accomplish! And perhaps, after all, it doesn't matter to Frances E. Willard, or any other deceased person, whether Father Keane offers up prayers or not. If they survive death, and are in the hands of a wise god, Father Keane's advice can hardly be necessary.

Bishop Creighton, of London, with his £10,000 a year, is under no particular temptation to dishonesty; in fact, if he went stealing or sharpening with a salary like that, he would prove that he had a treble dose of original sin. How easy was it, then, for his lordship to preach at St. Paul's last Monday to a congregation of city men, and wind up with "an eloquent plea for a recognition of the supreme claim of moral goodness and honesty." Cheap and easy exhortation of this kind hardly ever rises to the level of contempt. It is simply nauseous.

Down at St. Ives there was an *al fresco* baptism last Sunday. The pastor of the Baptist chapel had two ladies to put under the water treatment affected by his denomination, and he elected to go through the performance in the river. In the presence of a thousand spectators assembled on the quay, the reverend gentleman and one of his deacons led the ladies into the water until it reached their waists. Then he dipped each of the gasping sisters in Jesus backwards until her head was submerged. It is supposed that great religious efficacy lies in this ducking business. God Almighty is believed to look upon it with immense approval, though if he had any sense of humor he could hardly forbear laughing at the spectacle.

To every 10,000 marriages there are in France 127 divorces. This is not a great number, especially when we consider that there are 496 in Denmark, 458 in Switzerland, 444 in the United States, and even 157 in Germany. In Scotland there are only 29, and in England 19. But it must be remembered that we have only one ground of divorce in this country—namely, adultery, which, in the case of the husband, has to be complicated with cruelty.

The New Woman is coming in, but the Old Woman hasn't yet gone out. Piper Findlater, who is now in Netley Hospital, has had more than one offer of marriage, the last being from a lady who gives him the refusal of her hand and heart and five thousand a year. All because he played his pipes while the bullets were flying! Evidently there's a lot of the old "human nature" left in the world.

A paragraph in a Queensland paper says that "a thousand gallons of whisky are imported into the northern territory for every missionary." This is surely an exaggeration; no single missionary can require such a quantity for his own consumption.

An instructive story of Christian missions comes from Alaska. Over forty years ago William Duncan went there as a missionary among the Indians of the North Pacific Coast. He had the sense to see that what these barbarians, who had been cannibals, really wanted was secular civilization. He lived among them, and began to teach them improved arts of life, the new industries beginning significantly enough with soap-making.

Mr. Duncan's success was most encouraging. He established a colony at Metlakatla, which the Indians flocked to join, despite their having to promise to give up heathenism, gambling, and drinking, and to be clean, peaceful, industrious; to be liberal and honest in trade, to build neat houses, to pay the village tax, and to send the children to

school. Metlakatla, under Duncan's guidance, rapidly grew into a considerable village of well-built houses, with a population of 1,000. A church, a town hall, a school, a co-operative store, all went well till the home authorities, finding much interest taken in Mr. Duncan's experiment, and money coming in as a result, got North British Columbia raised to the dignity of a bishopric.

Of course, Mr. Duncan, a layman, had no chance of being bishop. Over him was appointed Bishop Ridley, whom Katherine Prence, writing on the subject in the *New York Post* of March 18, calls a vain, short-sighted, and unscrupulous man, who would willingly have overset the civilizing work of a score of years to contribute to his own elevation.

The Bishop found a most shocking state of things. These converted heathen actually used no wine in commemoration of "our Lord's Last Supper"—not where he ate, but where he was eaten. The Bishop insisted on the full and proper ceremonial. Mr. Duncan protested that it would be a temptation. The mere taste of the wine would be to them as poisonous fire, nor could they at that stage in their development be made to understand why the Church should command what the law and their reason forbade.

Moreover, Mr. Duncan pointed out that the phrases used with the bestowal of the bread and wine—"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ.....Take and eat;" "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.....Drink this"—could not safely be said to a man yet newly weaned from cannibalism. The untutored Indians would be apt to see the barbarism of the whole business of salvation through blood, and would fail to understand the subtle explanations of modern Christians.

Bishop Ridley "cared for none of these things," resented the layman's independence, talked much of "mutilated Christianity," and finally so worked upon the Church Missionary Society in London that it severed its connection with Mr. Duncan and withdrew from him all aid. Not content with this, he did his best to ruin Metlakatla trade, and finally got the Indians driven off their own land, and forced to a new settlement on Annette Island, Alaska, under the U. S. A. Government, where a new and thriving community has been established, which now has a new enemy in the rumor of gold on the island, which is likely to cause a rush of Christian land-grabbers.

At the meetings of the Bible Society, of the S. P. C. K., and kindred organizations, we hear much of the avidity with which the Bible is accepted by the heathen. But we are not told that it is sought for as a fetish-book to bring luck, nor that much of it is calculated to sustain their superstitions and barbarism. Fancy African believers in sorcery reading "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"! Ulfilas, the apostle to the Goths, was well advised in not translating the historical parts of the Old Testament, lest it encouraged their love of bloodshed. It is the savagery in the old book which most commends it to savages.

The Rev. J. Macdonald, long a missionary in Africa, says: "That many native Christians can glibly repeat our Church formulas I am aware, and the missionary who is content with that as an evidence of an understanding of Christian doctrine is a happy man. He will burn with indignation at native Christians being traduced, as he will feel certain they are, by what has been said. But if he will take the trouble to occupy the same hut, with half-a-dozen of his deacons or other office-bearers on a Sunday night, and, pretending to be fast asleep, listen to a discussion of his own sermon, he will get a rude awakening. The oftener he does this the clearer will be his light, if the greater his surprise."

Should missionaries fight? Bishop Hanlan, in Uganda, says: "Yes. It is absolutely necessary for every European in the country to stand shoulder to shoulder." The trouble is that missionaries want to fight when they please, and at the same time enjoy the privileges and immunities of non-combatants.

The Church papers are ever lamenting clerical poverty, and the consequent diminution of the number of candidates for holy orders. They ought to praise heaven for decreasing the enticements away from God, and enhancing the real attraction of a career where the primary precept is self-denial.

The *Outlook*, of New York, tells the liberal—that is, free-thinking—ministers to stay in the church till they are turned out. It reminds them that Jesus stayed in the Jewish Church, Luther in the Catholic, and Wesley in the Anglican. The *Observer* denounces this advice as immoral. It says the new pulpit sets aside the old gospel of salvation:—"There may be a place for the free lance in Unitarian churches, or in a few independent organizations that have repudiated all creeds: but not in any of the

evangelical churches that cordially approve the orthodox creed of Christendom. It is not so 'nominated in the bond.' Such morality as that proposed to liberal ministers would not be tolerated for a day in a business firm or association composed of worldly men, or even of heathen. Against it we appeal to the Christian conscience, to the heathen conscience, to any dawns or glimmerings whatsoever of any conscience that has not stultified itself by shuffling the earthly, sordid, and indefensible 'What I want' into the place of the divine and immutable 'What I ought.'

A member of the Mexborough School Board raised the hair of the clericals by proposing that the Polychrome Bible should be purchased for the use of the teachers. If the children must have Biblical instruction, he thought they should know the rights of it. And if they are instructed in one religion, why should they not be made acquainted with all? Only school time is limited, which is an excellent reason why only those things should be taught which all can agree upon.

At a meeting of the Thames Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the vicar (the Rev. J. Isaac Cohen) sought to impress the audience that the results of archaeological discovery shattered those reached by the Higher Criticism, which, he lamented, traced up the earlier books of the Bible into an indefinite number of writers, undermining their grounds of belief in the historical accuracy and authority of the book as the Word of God. A sufficient comment upon this is that the latest critical Bible, the Polychrome, entirely endorses the Higher Criticism with its slicing up of the old books. Mr. Cohen, of course, trotted out Chedorloamer without any indication that Mr. Pinches is now not so sure about having discovered his name.

Then Mr. Cohen naively referred to the Flood, and suggested that the critics were wrong in finding two sources of the story in Genesis, because one source had been found in Chaldea far more ancient than the time of Moses. It's a pretty way to back up the inspiration of the Bible to find its stories current long before it was written.

American Congregationalists are concerned at the increasing number of uneducated men who fill their pulpits. But what is the use of grumbling? If the best men seek a living in secular pursuits, the churches must put up as best they can with the inferior residuum.

The Rev. C. S. Horne, of 9 Campden Hill-gardens, W., is conducting a symposium in the *Independent* on "Why Young Men do not Go to Church." Perhaps some of our readers may favor him with their reasons.

The Spiritist *Progressive Thinker* issues a supplement entirely filled with reports of the crimes of preachers. It appears that in this department the Methodists are to the fore. A large portion of the offences are connected with women, whom Satan ever uses to bring about the downfall of the elect.

For some time past complaints reached the Edinburgh detectives of an individual who was guilty of indecent behavior on the Suburban Railway. A watch was set, and the person turned out to be a well-known local preacher and Christian Endeavorer named David Donaldson.

At a special sitting of the Lichfield Diocesan Consistory, on Thursday, March 31, the Rev. Gerald Hayward, priest vicar of Lichfield Cathedral, was found guilty of immorality and misconduct. The witnesses against him were a young lady of seventeen and several choir boys. Sentence was deferred until the Bishop had been communicated with.

This Rev. Gerald T. G. Hayward has been deprived by his bishop of all preferment in the Cathedral, and all ecclesiastical promotion in the diocese of Lichfield. Hayward was a married man, residing in the Cathedral close.

Here follow some items of religious intelligence taken from the *Truthseeker* of March 26: "Deacon Phelps, who preaches in the Episcopal church at Babylon, Long Island, was hauled up for excessive intimacy with a married woman of his congregation. He says she led him astray by loaning him Sienkiewicz's religious novel, *Quo Vadis*.

"An ecclesiastical court finds that the Rev. Wilbert F. Williams, Episcopal, of Washington, D.C., has been guilty of immorality and other ministerial conduct, and he is deposed.

"A San Francisco Salvationist, who styles himself General Spurgeon, commander of the Army of Jesus

Christ, is in jail for assaulting a seven-year-old girl, to whom he communicated a loathsome disease.

"Undue intimacy between the Rev. George Mitchell and the wife of the Rev. Charles H. Doke, of Delaware, O., has led the Rev. Mr. Doke to sue for a divorce, naming the Rev. Mr. Mitchell as co-respondent.

"The Rev. W. A. Magett, a colored preacher from North Carolina, visited Bishop Lennox, also colored, at Erie, Pa., and stayed all night. The next day the bishop missed his watch, and landed the Rev. Magett in jail."

The Rev. Jas. Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, of New York, has been writing on "The Final Test of Religious Belief." The *Truthseeker*, ever sedulous in exact scriptural statement, points out that the final test, according to Christ's final statement in Mark, is the ability to take poison with impunity. Now, the Rev. James Buckley, editor, etc., recently ate some canned corned, and was made ill from the poison of the lead in the can. Evidently the Rev. James Buckley is not a believer, and, therefore, not religious, though editor of a religious paper.

By the way, our esteemed contemporary in the same column ascribes the saying, "God's excuse is that he does not exist," to Henri Bayle. It should be Henri Beyle, better known as de Stendhal. The saying is given in the little book "H. B.," by Beyle's friend, Prosper Merimée.

M. Oppert undertakes to reconcile Bible chronology with Assyrian inscriptions. He has, however, a prior and as difficult a task—namely, to reconcile the Biblical data with one another.

It is stated that the loss of membership by the Methodist body in England has been 645,853 since 1881. This depletion exceeds the aggregate of the entire present Connexional membership by upwards of 206,000. The strength of the Salvation Army has largely come through lapses from Methodism. Booth has gathered up the uncultured Wesleyans, while some of the higher ranks have drifted to the Church of England as more artistic, musical, and socially respectable.

The gipsy who refused to give up his children to the Blackpool medical officer, who was armed with a magistrate's order, said: "There was only him, his wife, and Jesus Christ to look after the children, and to take them they would have to cut his throat." Jesus Christ does not seem to have done anything to prevent the children taking disease.

The Spiritists have been celebrating the Jubilee of the outbreak of modern Spiritism, through the feminine Foxes, at Hydesville, U.S.A., in 1848. But Spiritism, far from being modern, is really a very ancient root superstition. The Fox sisters did not even originate the rappings with which their name was associated, and which two of them afterwards confessed they did by cracking their knee and toe joints; for similar noises were alleged in the case of ghosts, testified to by Wesley, and in the Spiritist manifestations among the half-daft Shakers before 1848.

Mr. Grant Allen, in his latest serious work, remarks that the cult of the dead is at once the earliest origin of all religion, and the last relic of the religious spirit which survives the gradual decay of faith due to modern scepticism.

A woman arraigned in Philadelphia for larceny accounted for the presence of a sheet belonging to another woman in her bundle in this way: "I didn't steal the sheet; it must have been the devil who put it there." Religion has lost so much of its potency, even in Pennsylvania, that the court refused to accept the explanation, and yet the defence was perfectly orthodox. At this late day, both within and without the Church, when an individual has said some particularly brilliant thing, or done some especially good or some very bad act, men and women confidently assure us that he was inspired by a god or a devil or a spirit. This woman, pleading not guilty to the charge of larceny, and shouldering her apparent offence upon the "devil," is just as likely to be right as are those good persons who tell me that whatever I do or say that they think is out of the ordinary comes from "the Lord," or from the "spirit world." Science has only just commenced its educational work.—*Lucifer*.

Lieut.-Col. Robertson, defending flogging against Mr. Joseph Collinson, says: "I would not like to write about a punishment strongly recommended in our Bibles, and call it, as Mr. Collinson does, 'stupid and brutal punishment.' That does not appear to me to be reverential." Reverence for barbarism is a virtue in high esteem among barbarians.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, April 10, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. : 7.30, "The Dream of the Resurrection."  
 April 17, Huddersfield.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 17, Athenæum Hall, London ; 26, 27, 28, 29, and May 1, Glasgow and Districts. May 8, Manchester ; 15 and 16, Birmingham ; 22, Sheffield.—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.

W. TRUMAN.—We saw the announcement of Mr. Andrew Lang's new book entitled *The Making of Religion*. Of course it will be noticed in the *Freethinker* as soon as possible after publication.

J. RALSTON.—We hope the circular, which seems a good idea, will bring the Motherwell Branch fresh members and subscriptions. You certainly deserve to succeed. It is pleasant to hear that the lectures by Messrs. Foote and Cohen have excited so much interest and brought you some recruits. It will be an excellent thing if you can arrange a public debate in the autumn. Keep pegging away, as Lincoln used to say. After all, it is the steady, regular work that tells most.

J. T. GALE (Belfast).—We have already inserted a reply to the letter you refer to on Phrenology.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Mr. C. Cohen acknowledges : D. Watt, 7s.

EX-RITUALIST.—Received. The verses shall appear.

MRS. KNOWLES has retired from the secretaryship of the Blackburn Branch. The new secretary is Mr. N. Ashworth, 48 Bay-street, Little Harwood.

W. G. ALLEN.—All the requisite information is contained in Mrs. Bonner's pamphlet. If that doesn't satisfy your Christian friends, what is the use of our adding anything? Evidently nothing would satisfy them but making Bradlaugh die again before a committee of Christians.—A membership form has been sent you.

A. E. DAVIS.—Your letter will appear in our next.

R. E. HOLDEN.—It is not a matter in which we could usefully interfere, although we sympathize with you.

TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—G. L. Lupton, £1; H. A. Lupton, 5s.; J. J. Kimberley, 5s.; Symonds, 2s. 6d.; Boorman, 2s. 6d.; Booker, 2s. 6d. *Per C. Cohen*:—W. H. Wood, 10s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—Liverpool Branch, 15s.

CONSTANT READER.—The number of this journal you require can be obtained by applying to our publisher, R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. Please send to him direct. We cannot attend to orders personally. With regard to your inquiry, the *Freethinker* has a much larger circulation than any other Freethought journal in this country, but it is expensive to produce, and does not yield a fortune to its editor. The best way in which our readers can help us is by procuring us fresh subscribers.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Isle of Man Times—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Sydney Bulletin—University Magazine—Free Society—Star—Freidenker—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Liberator—People's Newspaper—Torch of Reason—Liverpool Mercury—Weekly Citizen—Vegetarian Messenger—Oxford Times—Ethical World.

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.

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.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

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.

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- (1) Get your newspaper to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening (April 10) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road. The day being Easter Sunday, he will take for his subject "The Dream of the Resurrection."

Mr. Foote has concluded his week's Freethought Mission at Chatham and New Brompton. Owing to a bad cold, he was unable to lecture on the second evening; but his place was kindly taken that evening by Mr. Charles Watts. None of the local ministers put in an appearance to say a word for their faith, or to save souls from being led to perdition; indeed, there was evidently a general boycott on the part of the orthodox. However, the audience, which at first was meagre, grew larger every evening. The last week-night lecture in the Public Hall, New Brompton, was well attended and much appreciated. The subject was "The Morality of Nature," and Mr. Foote's sketch of the evolution of natural morality was followed with interested attention—particularly, if one may say so, by the female portion of the audience, which was one of its most gratifying features. On Sunday morning the seventh lecture was delivered to a very good assembly in the Secular Hall. In the evening there was a large meeting, which was as appreciative and enthusiastic as anyone could wish. Altogether the local Branch Committee is highly pleased with the success of the experiment. It has been a heavy tax on their slender resources, but they feel that considerable good has been done, and they only regret that they are unable to follow it up with another series of meetings.

Many questions were asked after Mr. Foote's lectures, and the replies appeared to give satisfaction. The little opposition that was offered was extremely poor, most of it coming from a pompous and ridiculous defender of Christianity, who has a taste for firing off long extracts, which he only seems to half understand himself, from more or less distinguished writers. This person wound up on the Sunday morning with some insulting language, for which he was promptly rebuked by the audience as well as by the lecturer. It says little for the zeal of the more educated and intelligent defenders of the faith that they left the championship of Christianity in the hands of such a lump of conceit and incapacity.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured last Sunday evening in the Athenæum Hall, London, upon "Prayer and Muller's Orphanage." The subject called forth many questions and a rather lively debate. On resuming his seat Mr. Watts received quite an ovation. His recital of "God of Nature Give us Light" was enthusiastically applauded. Mr. Harry Brown presided, and showed excellent tact during the debate.

The two nights' debate last week at Portsmouth between Mr. Watts and the Rev. A. J. Waldron was, we are glad to hear, a success, and that in spite of the fact that thousands of workmen were doing overtime at the dockyards. Perfect order was maintained, and both disputants observed the most gentlemanly conduct towards each other. The audience, which was about equally divided between professed Christians and Freethinkers, was very enthusiastic each night, and took great interest in the proceedings.

The National Secular Society's Conference will be held this year at Manchester, in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints. A fuller announcement will be made in our next issue. Meanwhile we venture to express a hope that all Branches will at once take steps to be represented on Whit-Sunday. Individual members are also invited to attend. Motions for the Conference agenda should be sent in to the Secretary, Miss Vance, 367-7, Strand, London, W.C., as soon as possible—not later than the first week in May.

Tyneside friends will please note that Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (April 10) in the Co-operative Hall, Whitehall, Gateshead, morning, afternoon, and evening. Last week Mr. Cohen debated at Law Junction with a local evangelist on "The Reasonableness of Theism." There was a good attendance, and the debate has caused considerable excitement in the district. Mr. Cohen's lectures at Stanley were also well attended.

Mr. Robert Forder is to lecture this evening (April 10) in the Secular Hall, New Brompton, his subject being "All About Easter." No doubt he will have a good audience and a hearty welcome.

The Bethnal Green Branch begins its open-air campaign early this year. The station is in Victoria Park near the fountain, where it holds meetings every Sunday afternoon

at 3.15. The lecturer this afternoon (April 10) is Mr. Stanley Jones. We hope the local "saints" will rally round the committee.

Zola has won on appeal. The Court has quashed his sentence by declaring the whole trial to have been illegal. No right of action lay with the Minister of War, who instituted the prosecution. Of course, this is a triumph on a technicality. Still, it saves Zola from prison, and gives a breathing space for the better side of French nature to assert itself.

Captain Robert Adams lectured at St. James's Hall (Banqueting Room) on Monday evening under the auspices of the Legitimation League, his subject being "The Right of Private Judgment in Morals." Among the large audience were a good many well-known Freethinkers, including Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. J. M. Wheeler, and Miss E. M. Vance. Mr. Foote, who occupied the chair, explained that he did so mainly as a mark of respect for the lecturer, whose views on sexual questions he did not entirely share, but whose right to hold and expound them could only be assailed by bigots. Captain Adams gave a very interesting discourse, containing some valuable information as to the progress and difficulties of free criticism on morality in America. His own position appeared to be that men and women should regulate their own sexual relationships without regard to God, Government, or Mrs. Grundy. He was opposed to setting up any "one ideal" for all, whether by Conservatives or by Progressives. The great desideratum was personal freedom. Captain Adams answered several questions in a frank and courteous fashion. Some discussion followed—if discussion it was—and finally Mr. Oswald Dawson proposed, and Mr. G. Bedborough seconded, a vote of thanks to the chairman. This was carried by acclamation. Mr. Foote, in responding, said that he had, like a good chairman, kept out of the discussion himself. He dissented from a good deal that had been said, but of course he had other opportunities of ventilating his opinions. Anyhow, he was in favor of free discussion, which was more important than any individual conclusion.

The Humanitarian League has just issued its seventh annual report, which shows a steady increase in membership and activity, the work done during 1897 having largely surpassed that of any previous year, while the four special departments of the League, which deal with criminal law and prison reform, sports, humane diet and dress, and lantern lectures for children, have an equally full record. The League is a striking contrast to many religious and charitable societies in the amount of work done and the slenderness of its resources. Both are accounted for by its having an indefatigable unpaid secretary in Mr. Salt. Among its publications of the year were *Humane Science Lectures*, a shilling edition of *The New Charter*, and *Humanitarian Essays* and various pamphlets, in addition to the monthly organ, *Humanity*. The work recorded in this report is worthy of all praise.

Last Sunday Mrs. Charles Watts once more occupied the platform at the Leicester Secular Hall, and entertained a large audience with recitations and readings. Her programme was very varied, ranging from tragedy to the lightest and brightest comedy. Breathless attention at one moment and roars of laughter at others showed how thoroughly the audience enjoyed the entertainment.

Our New York contemporary, the bright and gallant *Truthseeker*, makes mention of Mr. Charles Watts's sixty-third birthday, and says: "When the Freethinkers of the future look back on the last half of this century and regard the work done by Mr. Watts and his associates, they will say again, 'And there were giants in those days.'"

George Macdonald continues his wise and witty "Observations" in the *Truthseeker*. We are glad to see that friend George is not infected with the war fever, like so many of his countrymen. He doesn't believe that war would check the increasing corruption in public life. "The remedy," he says, "would aggravate the distemperature; for the corruptest sort of jobs are incubated in war times."

Frances Wright was a brilliant Freethought advocate in the first half of the present century. Her style is, perhaps, a little too florid and diffuse to exactly hit the taste of the present age; nevertheless, the lectures she delivered in America in 1829 are worth preserving, and we are glad to see them reprinted. Mr. George Anderson has borne the cost of production, and if the whole edition is disposed of he will be just recouped for the outlay. The price is one shilling, and copies can be obtained from Mr. Forder, or from Miss Vance at the N. S. S. Office, 376-7, Strand, W.C. We may add that the volume is neatly printed and tastefully bound.

## SOME EPITAPHS.

"Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs."—*King Richard II.*

BURLY old Dr. Johnson somewhat grimly observed that while few, indeed, can expect to furnish matter for an heroic poem, there are many who may confidently look forward to being recorded in an epitaph. Yet the number of tombstone inscriptions of real distinction is by no means unlimited. Everyone knows Dryden's lines on Milton:—

Three poets in three distant ages born,  
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;  
The first, in loftiness of thought surpass'd;  
The next, in majesty; in both, the last.  
The force of nature could no further go;  
To make a third, she join'd the former two.

This, of course, recalls Pope's lines, intended for Newton's tomb in Westminster Abbey:—

Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night;  
God said, *Let Newton be!* and all was Light.

Wren's epitaph on a pillar by his vault under the south wing of the Choir of St. Paul's is a model of terseness: "*Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice*" ("Reader, if you seek a monument, look around"). Another beautiful, simple, and expressive epitaph is that on Copernicus, in Cracow: "He commanded the sun to stand still"—the very text which had been used against him in his lifetime.

Ben Jonson's "Elizabeth" is hard to beat:—

Underneath this stone doth lie  
As much beauty as could die;  
Which, when alive, did harbor give  
To more virtue than doth live.  
If at all she had a fault,  
Leave it buried in this vault;  
One name was Elizabeth,  
Th' other—let it sleep with death;  
Fitter, where it dyed to tell,  
Than that it lived at all.—Farewell!

Yet more famous is the one he wrote on the Countess Dowager of Pembroke:—

Underneath this marble hearse  
Lies the subject of all verse—  
Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother—  
Death! ere thou hast slain another  
Fair and learned, and good as she,  
Time shall throw his dart at thee.

Rare Ben's epitaph on his son, too, is touching:—

Rest in soft peace, and ask'd say: "Here doth lie  
Ben Jonson, his best piece of poetry!"

One of the finest prose inscriptions is that written by Charles Reade on Laura Seymour, who is buried with him at Willesden. As I have no accurate record of the words beside me, I will merely direct the reader's attention to it. Many of the old Pagan epitaphs were admirable. What could be better than that on Baucis: "His death was the evening of a beautiful day"?

In the South Kensington Museum is a splendid one, a tablet by a Japanese Buddhist in honor of his wife, for whom he says he will go through myriads of hells if only he may see her again at the end.

On the tomb of T. Ravenscroft (1708), in Westminster Abbey, is:—

What I gave, I have;  
What I spent, I had;  
What I left, I lost by not giving it.

The sentiment is used by G. F. Watts in one of his cartoons in the Tate Gallery.

Many of the epitaphs on Freethinkers are notable. Abul-Ola, the blind and childless Syrian Freethinking poet, had inscribed on his tomb in Arabic verse: "I owe this to the fault of my father; none owe the like to mine." This is pessimistic with a vengeance. More of the spirit of meliorism is on the tombstone of William Kingdon Clifford in Highgate Cemetery: "I was not, and was conceived; I loved, and did a little work; I am not, and grieve not." Near Clifford's tomb is that of "George Eliot," with the inscription: "O may I join the Choir Invisible!"

Abul-Ola's epitaph reminds us of the lines rendered by Cowper from the Greek:—

At three-score winters' end I died,  
A cheerless being, sole and sad;  
The nuptial knot I never tied,  
And wish my father never had.

The same sentiment becomes terribly severe when penned by another hand, as in Thorold Rogers's epitaph on a notorious skinflint :—

Unwedded, here Dean W— lies :  
Would that his sire had been as wise.

Another heavy bolt from the same hand are the lines :—

Upon the man who's buried here  
Drop anything except a tear.

And yet one more :—

Pass, traveller, on ; no need to linger here,  
This monument no history reveals ;  
Truth writes no virtue on this wretch's bier,  
His vices Charity at last conceals.

Another Arabian, Mansur, is remembered by his epitaph on the death of one of the sons of the Vizier, Cassim Obed Allah :—

Poor Cassim ! thou art doom'd to mourn  
By destiny's decree ;  
Whatever happen, it must turn  
To misery for thee.

Two sons had'st thou ; the one thy pride,  
The other was thy pest ;  
Ah, why did cruel death decide  
To snatch away the best ?

No wonder thou should'st droop with woe,  
Of such a child bereft ;  
But now thy tears must doubly flow,  
For ah ! the other's left.

The epitaph on himself, written in extreme age by Dr Messenger Monsey, is curious :—

Here lie my old bones ; my vexation now ends ;  
I have lived much too long for myself and my friends.  
As to churches and churchyards, which parsons call holy,  
'Tis a rank piece of priestcraft, and founded on folly.  
What the next world may be never troubled my pate ;  
If not better than this, I beseech thee, O Fate,  
When the bodies of millions rise up in a riot,  
To let the old carcase of Monsey lie quiet.

Bradlaugh's characteristic motto, "Thorough," is on his bust at Woking. On the tomb of the young Australian poet, Francis Adams, who committed suicide at Margate, are his last lines :—

Bury me with clenched hands,  
And with eyes open wide ;  
For in storm and struggle I lived,  
And in storm and struggle I died.

On the tomb of John Watts (once editor of the *National Reformer*), in Kensal Green are the lines from Bryant's "Thanatopsis" :—

So live that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan, which, silent, moves  
To that mysterious realm where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death—  
Thou go, not like the quarry slave, at night  
Scourged to his dungeon, but approach thy grave  
As one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
Around him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

An epitaph proposed for Richard Carlile was :—

The frail memorial you see here  
One honest truth would show ;  
A man who nothing knew to fear,  
And nothing feared to know.

While on the grave of Elizur Wright were inscribed the lines :—

Lay me low, my work is done ;  
I am weary, lay me low,  
Where the wild flowers woo the sun,  
Where the balmy breezes blow,  
Where the butterfly takes wing,  
Where the aspens drooping grow,  
Where the young birds chirp and sing ;  
I am weary, let me go.

Shield and buckler, hang them up,  
Drape the standard on the wall ;  
I have drained the mortal cup  
To the finish, dregs and all.  
When my work is done, 'tis best  
To let all my troubles go.  
I am weary, let me rest ;  
I am weary, lay me low.

J. M. W.

If the Church gets the girls, she is quite sure of the fellows.  
—*Borrow*.

## CHRISTIAN TRUTH AND CANDOR.

DANIEL DEWAR, D.D., LL.D., Principal of Marischal College and University, Aberdeen, published *The Evidences of Divine Revelation*. The *Athenæum*, June 29, 1839, thus remarked upon it: "It has been our misfortune to read many bad books on the 'Evidences of Revelation,' few worse than this by Principal Daniel Dewar. Narrow and sectarian in its views, uncandid in its statements, and illogical in its arguments, the work is calculated to do mischief in the University where it is to be established as a text-book. One whole chapter is devoted to proving that all infidels have discarded religious feeling and moral restraint. This is notoriously untrue, and Principal Dewar, if qualified for the situation he holds, must know that it is so; but he observes: 'To say that a man is an infidel is to say proverbially that he is destitute of all moral excellence both in principle and practice. This phraseology has grown into use merely from the conduct of infidels, as observed from the common eye of mankind.' This specimen of an argument founded on the vulgar mad-dog cry of 'infidel' is not, however, original; Principal Dewar has stolen the weapon from what Mr. Finch calls the 'Armoury of Satan'—you have only to change 'infidel' into 'Christian,' and you have the argument of the heathen persecutors, or into 'heretic,' and you have the apology for the Inquisition."

The *Athenæum* hit the nail right straight on the head. Defenders of the faith and slanderers of infidels would be the first to complain if they were treated by Pagans and Mohammedans as they always treat us when they are able. Although the book in question was published fifty-seven years ago, the clergy, where it is possible to do so with impunity, still follow the practice of lying and slandering to defend their wicked creeds and sinful courses. It is safe to affirm that more lying has been resorted to in defence of the "faith," as they call Christian nonsense and fudge, than for all other purposes, in equal time; and that more malice has been employed in defending the religion of "charity" than in any other cause. The defence of Christianity proves its nature, for the very worst elements of human life could never have been systematically enlisted in a true and holy cause.

## GOING TOO FAR.

"WHEN I was a young man," said the judge, mopping the beer off his trousers with a handkerchief which he had borrowed from Billy Wood, "I knew a blacksmith in our village who was one of the hardest tickets in the place. A revival preacher came along, and Tom was converted. It made a great change in him, and he was held up by church people as a signal example of the saving power of grace. After Tom had been travelling on the road to Heaven for about three weeks his turn came to be examined on his fitness for church membership. Tom was an awful heathen, and, although he could sing and pray with the loudest, he couldn't read, and he knew no more about the Bible than a wild African. The session (I think that's what they call it) met on Saturday night, and Tom went in, with his face washed and his cap in his hand, looking a little embarrassed, but as happy as new converts always are. After the praying and other preliminaries, the parson got to work on Tom. He told him the story of Jonah and the whale, and asked him if he believed that.

"Believe that a man was in a whale's belly an' come out alive?" cried Tom. "Do the Bible say that, parson?"

"Certainly, certainly, brother."

"Oh, yes, yes; of course I believe it," says Tom.

"Do you believe that the three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were cast into a furnace heated seven times hotter than usual, and that they walked in the flame praising the Lord, and not even their garments were singed?"

"Tom's eyes bulged out of his head as he looked at the parson and gasped:

"Do the Bible say that, parson?"

"Yes, of course, my brother."

"That them fellers you spoke of walked around in fire seven times hotter'n I kin heat my forge?"

"Yes, my brother; do you believe it?"

"Tom rose up and got out into the aisle. Then he sputtered:

"No, I don't. And I don't believe that dam fish story neither, now."

If Beelzebub were to appear in England, he would receive a letter from the secretary of the Manchester Athenæum as Eugène Sue did, requesting the honor of his interesting company, and venturing to hope for an address.—*Carlisle*.

### MY SORRY TALE OF WOE.

I AM a Christian preacher, and a highly-gifted teacher  
Of all those things you sinners ought to know ;  
But my luck in this 'ere city is enough to stir your pity,  
So listen to my sorry tale of woe.

This world is going to ruin, for the devil he's a doin'  
Just about as he's a mind to here below ;  
He will take away my scholars, so I won't get any  
dollars ;  
So listen to my sorry tale of woe.

The men that make the papers cut some mighty curious  
capers ;  
And the men that make our laws don't seem to know  
How to remedy the evil and to help choke off the devil,  
So listen to my sorry tale of woe.

I believe the Lord Jehovah really ought to think it  
over ;  
I tell him that he's movin' awful slow,  
That he ought to get a hustle and help us in this tussle ;  
Oh, listen to my sorry tale of woe !

There's a hell beyond the coffin for you chaps that's  
always scoffin',  
There'll be a hot time in the future where you go.  
When the fire begins to crackle, you'll sweat and hear  
me crackle,  
Then you may tell *your* sorry tale of woe.

Soon will Gabriel blow his trumpet, and the way that  
men will hump it  
To their several destinations won't be slow ;  
For each one that gets to heaven, hell is sure of ninety-  
seven ;  
Oh, is not this a sorry tale of woe !

I don't brag, for I'm too 'umble, and the Lord don't seem  
to tumble  
To the fact that I'm a rooter, don't yer know ?  
But when I'm gone to glory I will bet you he'll be  
sorry  
That I had to tell this awful tale of woe.

—Frank W. Wilson.

### BOOK CHAT.

*The Mummy's Dream: An Egyptian Story of the Exodus*, written and illustrated by H. B. Proctor (Simpkin Marshall London ; E. Howell, Liverpool ; 2s.), is a novel not to be classed with those spoken of by Cowper:—

And novels, witness every month's review,  
Belie their name and offer nothing new.

It tells the story of a young man who, visiting Egypt, is encountered by a Dr. Schwartz, travelling director to the Boulak-Museum, who induces him to be hypnotized, while lying hand in hand, with an unwashed mummy in a newly-opened tomb, to thus find out the truth concerning the transmigration of souls. The mummy is that of Oli-Mel, royal architect to Rameses II., whose spirit is thus placed *en rapport* with Mortimer, and tells, through him, how he was a school-fellow of Mesu, or Moses, who, it appears, was suspected to be the child of Pharaoh's daughter, since the story told of his being found in the bulrushes was related in almost the same words of Sargon, the King of Babylon. His resemblance to the princess, we are told, gave rise to the saying which, in case of irregularities, explained a great deal: "She found it in the bulrushes."

The career of Mesu is told by his school-fellow and companion, Oli-Mel, who, while admiring him in many respects, admits he suffered from homicidal mania. In many respects it agrees with what is told in the Pentateuch and in Josephus ; but additions and explanations are given from the Egyptian point of view. Thus, we are told that he led out the Aperiu, not across the Red Sea, but across the isthmus, where the Egyptian troops were lost in the boggy edge of the Serbonian Lake ; that, with one exception, plagues never happened, but were after-explanations of natural phenomena. The exception is that of the angel of the Lord destroying the Egyptians. It is explained that the foreign population one evening sprinkled their door-posts with blood, and the following morning the town was taken by a band of Shasu Bedouin of the desert, who murdered all in those houses that had not been sprinkled.

It will be seen that Mr. Proctor brings a plentiful sprinkling of Rationalism into his *Mummy's Dream*. Indeed, we should recommend the book, if only as an aid in breaking up Bibliolatry. But, beyond this, it is exceedingly lively reading, and the author is fairly versed in the discoveries

and speculations of Egyptologists. The many particulars in which the old Egyptian faith anticipated Christianity are well brought out on more than one occasion. For instance, there is a trial for heresy—Mesu being the heretic. Here is an extract: "Mesu denied the truth of the incarnation, the resurrection, and ascension of our Blessed Lord, whose name we then considered too holy to mention—I mean Ausar, called by the Greeks and moderns Osiris. We believed that he came down from heaven, and took upon him our nature, so that he might teach men the arts of peace, and how to live and die. It came to pass that he was destroyed and cut to pieces by a wicked band of deceivers, who scattered his holy remains to the four winds of heaven. But his faithful wife, Isis (Auset), the Mother of Consolation, wandered, weeping and lamenting, over all the land, and gathering up his remains. Then, while she shadowed him beneath her wings, he, by his divine nature, overcame death, and resumed his divinity. We believed that he, having tasted death for us, would come again to be our judge. We believed also in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Now, Mesu believed none of these things." The barbarous proceedings of Mesu with the Midianites and others are related as they might appear to a civilized Egyptian. We cordially recommend the book to those who wish to introduce a Freethinking novel to friends interested in Egypt. The description of how the colossal statue of Rameses, weighing nine hundred tons, was placed in position should delight Egyptologists. The work is well illustrated with photographs and woodcuts illustrating Egypt and Egyptian life, and from cover to finish the work is capitally produced.

Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, in a paper on "Abraham and the Land of his Nativity," in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, says: "The Arabs, especially the women, still go about without wearing drawers, as the custom used to be among the ancients like Noah and the Israelites. Among both Christians, Hebrews, and Moslems, it is a sin to enter any place of worship with their shoes on, as they adhere to God's command to Moses at the burning bush, though the former and the Jews are now following the European habit of performing their religious rites with their dirty shoes and boots on. It is a notable fact that up to the present day all Moslems, whether Turks, Arabs, Persians, or Indians, conform to the same divine command by taking their boots and shoes off when they perform their worship, though they are quite ignorant of the origin of the ceremony." The origin, however, was not the command of Jah to Moses, for its very form shows that to remove the shoes at a holy place was an old custom.

In *Sport in the Highlands of Kashmir* Mr. H. D. Parrah illustrates how merit may be mechanically acquired by Buddhist monks. A barrel eight inches long holds 1,400 thin leaves, on each side of which the prayer is printed, say, ten times. This gives 28,000 prayers, all of which are put to the pious worshipper's credit in the world to come if, with a touch of his finger, he makes the barrel revolve once. But a single vigorous impulsion makes the barrel revolve, say, thirty times: 840,000 prayers. And if the worshipper makes a round of the forty or fifty barrels hung up in his church, setting each spinning as he goes, the result is, even for a poor five minutes, an accumulation under which the brain feels dizzy.

The editor of *Crockford's Clerical Directory* has to complain of his clerical correspondents, who press him to insert in connection with their names unsuitable and even deliberately inaccurate statements, and assail him with complaints which are without foundation.

Dean Farrar, in his "Reminiscences," says that the first proofs of Dean Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* informed the reader that from the monastery of Sinai was visible "the horn of the burning beast"! This was a fearfully apocalyptic nightmare of the printer's devil for "the horizon of the Burning Bush." The original proof-sheets also stated that on turning the shoulder of Mount Olivet, in the walk from Bethany, "there suddenly burst upon the spectator a magnificent view of—Jones!" In this startling sentence "Jones" was a transmogrification of "Jerus," the dean's abbreviated way of writing "Jerusalem."

The *Daily News*, noticing Dr. J. G. Frazer's monumental work on Pausanias, says: "Not the least attractive description in Pausanias is his unconscious self-revelation. An honest, educated, reflective Greek of average intellect, he was, in religious ideas and beliefs, the type of a large class of his countrymen. It is deeply interesting to observe the conflict in his mind between the old ideas and the new ; between orthodoxy and scepticism. He does not deny the Hydra's existence ; he only denies all those heads. Nor that Lycaon had been turned into a wolf, but only that the miracle was repeated at the Lycean sacrifices. To the story of the hunter Actæon's having been killed by his own

dogs at the goddess's instigation he ascribes a rationalistic meaning; it was a case of hydrophobia. He cannot swallow the story that the Father of the Gods changed himself into a cuckoo to make love to Hera. As to the story of Narcissus, he dismisses it with the remark that Narcissus, being old enough to fall in love, must have known the difference between himself and his reflection. But Pausanias was a pious believer in the old gods, and in their active intervention in human affairs. He might be described as a Broad Churchman with a strongish leaning towards the old gang. But in one passage, his translator points out, Pausanias concludes that Apollo was the sun, and his offspring Æsculapius the air. 'Under the fierce light of criticism, the gods themselves seem on the point of melting away like mist before the sun, leaving behind them nothing but the clear, hard face of nature, over which for awhile the gorgeous pageantry of their shifting iridescent shapes had floated in a golden haze... Had Pausanias followed up this line of thought, he might, like Schiller, have seen as in a vision the bright procession of the gods winding up the long slope of Olympus, sometimes pausing to look back sadly at a world where they were needed no more.'

\* \* \*

In dedicating the splendid volumes of the Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes to the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Beaufort testifies: "Often have I seen His Royal Highness knocking over driven grouse and partridges and high-rocketing pheasants in first-rate workman-like style." If future generations are more humane than the present, this testimony may some day be quoted as an evidence of royal barbarism.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### UNLUCKY SKY-PILOTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With reference to your "Acid Drop" in the *Freethinker* of April 3 (p. 216) on the sailor's superstition that it is unlucky to have a sky-pilot on board, I think it arises from the old notion of the priest being a magician, and therefore "uncanny." Of course this may be, as you suggest, associated with the notion that his power ceases on water where the Prince of the Power of the Air exercises dominion; but it may also be associated with the idea that he may work his powers in prayer in a way undesired by sailors, or that the evil power may seek to ruin the vessel in order to drown the sky-pilot. The priest, as a sacred person, should be preserved from the terrors of the tempest.

The Rev. James Macdonald, in his *Religion and Myth*, says: "Fishermen will not go to sea with a minister on board, as in that case no success would attend their labors; they will not even have one enter their boats, if possible, as that is apt to take the boat's luck away. Skippers fear to have them as passengers, and voyagers expect contrary winds if a priest should happen to be among their fellow voyagers. I remember one Rob MacLauchlin, the owner of a smack that plied between Oban and Morven, having on one occasion a very boisterous passage, to the intense alarm of his passengers. On his arrival one of the villagers remarked on the state of the weather, and how suddenly the storm had sprung up. Rob, who had had a sail carried away and was in no good humor, replied, garnishing his sentences with expletives which I shall omit, 'How could we escape wind with three ministers on board?' These worthies were on their way to a local meeting of Presbytery. One of them, ignorant of seamen and their ways, offered a remonstrance, and tried to enlighten the skipper, but had to beat a hasty retreat. Rob knew all about it by long experience; and all his predecessors, from the days of Jonah at least, had been conversant of the fact. That was final and admitted of no appeal, and the villagers to a man sympathized with the skipper who was compelled to carry such cargo."

Mr. Macdonald says: "The minister is feared because he can bless or ban"; which is saying, in other words, that he is invested with the attributes of the old sorcerer and magician. As to the suggestion that the sky-pilots taboo Sunday, which used to be a lucky day, this may have contributed, but I think it would not of itself suffice to explain the superstition. I may confess that personally I have an abhorrence for black-beetles. But this is not on account of their powers, but their hypocrisy. Perhaps sailors have a similar feeling.

G. BORROW.

### DAWSON ON DARWIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your excellent contributor, B. Stevens, has earned the thanks of every Freethinker for drawing attention to Sir J. W. Dawson's vexatious misrepresentation of Darwin. What makes the matter still more vexatious is this:—Sir J. W. Dawson wrote an article for another journal (name

unnecessary) in which the identical quotation from Darwin is given, showing conclusively that the illustrious contributor had not read Darwin's *Life*, or had decided to ignore the chapter containing Darwin's regret for having used language altogether unscientific and wholly out of place in a scientific treatise. I wrote to the editor of the journal in question, pointing out the error into which his contributor had fallen; but the "courteous" editor paid no heed to my correction. This neglect, I may add, did not surprise me, because I knew how thoroughly I had "cornered" both the editor and his contributor!

I had occasion to direct the Duke of Argyll's attention to Darwin's withdrawal of the passage quoted by Mr. B. Stevens, and his Grace wrote me a letter in which he complains that Darwin did not withdraw his Pentateuchal language in editions of his book issued after that letter to Sir J. D. Hooker was written.

Perhaps Mr. Foote might devote a short article on this part of the Duke's letter, because I do think Darwin should have withdrawn the Pentateuchal language in later editions of the *Origin of Species*.  
J. KING.

I H S.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I regret to see you giving currency to the old notion that the IHS monogram has anything to do with the obscure name of Bacchus (YHS). There is absolutely no proof for this strange theory, and it rests entirely upon the assertions of some people of misguided learning and unchecked imagination. The IHS monogram was never used until many centuries after the worship of Bacchus had been forgotten, and no one has ever been able to prove any connection between them, notwithstanding the many assertions made in this connection. The American paper spells YHS as JES, in order to connect it with Jesus. But this is quite unwarrantable, and it is a pity such writers do not make themselves sure of their facts before committing themselves to sweeping statements which they cannot substantiate.  
G. HIGGINS.

[The currency we gave is the currency also given to Mr. Higgins's letter. We do not refuse insertion to suggestive articles because some item may be questionable. It was, we think, Godfrey Higgins, the author of *Anacalypsis*, who first gave currency in England to the idea that IHS was a Bacchic symbol. We believe its use as a Christian monogram was late, and, indeed, only popularized by its being a badge of Jesuits. It is a trivial matter, on which we are ready to receive more light.]

## THE BOYS.

JOHNNIE—"Papa, is mamma the better half of you?"  
Father—"Yes, my son, that's the way they put it."  
J.—"And are all wives the better half of their husband?"  
F.—"Certainly, my son."  
J.—"Then what part of King Solomon were his wives?"

The fond mother of three children was obliged to remonstrate with her oldest boy because in the children's games he would always take the lead. A few days later the mother, happening to go into the nursery, saw the two younger children engaged in amateur theatricals. The elder boy stood aside with arms folded, moodily watching them. "We are playing Adam and Eve," said the youngsters. She turned to the silent figure in the corner, about to praise him. "Who are you?" she asked. "God," was the answer.

Sky-Pilot—"Why are you playing on Sunday, boys?"  
"Cos father says it's healthier than going to Sunday-school."

Bob—"Do you say your prayers before going to bed?"  
Tom—"Certainly; I sleep in a folding-bed."

Clerical Papa—"What makes my little boy so thoughtful to-day?"  
Bobby—"I was thinking about your beautiful sermon on heaven, papa."  
Clerical Papa—"And what did you think, my angel?"  
"I wanted to ask you a question, papa!"  
Clerical Papa—"That's right, Bobby; always try to apply the sermon. Now what did you want to ask?"  
Bobby—"Papa, do you think we shall know each other in hell?"  
Bobby finds out later upstairs.

Sunday-school Teacher—"Yes, children, God made us all."  
Jimmy—"No'm, he didn't."  
Horried Teacher—"What?"  
Jimmy—"God didn't make my pa. Ma says she's made him what he is."

Small Boy—"Does God make apologies?"  
Clerical Visitor—"Certainly not."  
Small Boy—"Didn't he make you?"  
Clerical Visitor—"Certainly."  
Small Boy—"Well, pa says you are only an apology for a man."

Clergyman—"Why are you fishing on Sunday, my son?"  
Boy—"I'm not a-fishing, sir. I'm only teaching this worm how to swim."

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

### LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Dream of the Resurrection."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): April 14, 8.30, A. B. Moss, "Science and Superstition."  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Resurrection Story." Good Friday, 8.30 till 2, Ball.  
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, Stanley Jones.  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Alfred Milnes, M.A., "The Growth of the Liberty Ideal." 3, Peckham Rye (near band-stand), Mr. Clarke.  
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): No lecture.  
WEST LONDON BRANCH (381 Harrow-road, W., near Westbourne Park Station): Tuesday, at 9, Business meeting.  
WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): No lecture. Good Friday, 7.30, Lantern entertainment; children free.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones.  
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, Stanley Jones.  
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, F. Schaller will lecture.  
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, A. B. Moss.  
WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): F. A. Davies—11.30, "The Restoration Myth"; 3.30, "Faith and Finance."  
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "All Sorts of Gods."

### COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, R. Forder, "All About Easter."  
GATESHEAD (Co-operative Hall, Whitehall-road): C. Cohen—Morning, "What is there left of the Bible?"; afternoon, "What is the Use of Religion?"; evening, "Rome, Dissent, or Freethought?"  
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, open discussion: "Can Poverty be Abolished?"; 6.30, Stephen Downie, A lecture.  
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): No meeting.  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): No lecture.  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' quarterly meeting; 7, Willie Dyson, "An Easter Sermon."  
STOCKTON-ON-TEES (Market Cross): H. P. Ward—11, "Shall we Live After we are Dead?"; (Borough Hall Dining-room): 3, "Christianity the Faith that Failed"; 7, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—April 10, Gateshead; 17, Manchester; 24 and 25, Birmingham. May 1, Sheffield; 8, Liverpool; 15, Blackburn.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—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.—April 10, Stockton-on-Tees; 17, Glasgow.

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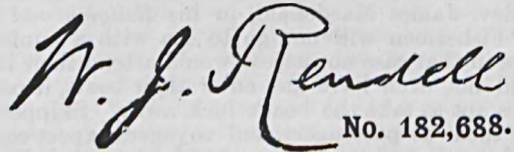
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