

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

CHRIST IN LONDON.

Now we sha'n't be long! Christ is coming to London, and the city will be regenerated. And we may expect him very soon. We have Dr. Parker's word for it; and is he not minister of the City Temple, where Christ will probably establish his headquarters? Could there be a higher authority except that of the boss himself?

"Come, come," the reader will say, "what's the matter? Do be serious, and tell us all about it." Well, we will. So let the reader open his eyes wide, and stroke his ears gracefully; for we beg to assure him that the longer his ears are the more is he likely to understand and appreciate Dr. Parker.

There appears to have been a meeting at the Guildhall, in the city of London, on March 23 of the present year; and we gather that its object was to put down drunkenness, gambling, and impurity—which, by the way, are the three cardinal vices of Christian nations. Dr. Parker was one of the speakers at this gathering, and he has since published the "substance" of his address in the form of a threepenny pamphlet, bearing the title of *Regenerated London*. Many people will regard this as a remarkably "large order," but Dr. Parker is a sanguine gentleman; sanguine in spite of the fact that he has been preaching in London for more than a quarter of a century, and has, during all that time, produced as much effect upon the moral life of this metropolis as a flea produces upon the gravity of an elephant.

Dr. Parker's address contains, perhaps, two sensible observations. One of them is stated in his first sentence. "In the matter of drunkenness, gambling, and impurity," he says, "we have probably had sufficient denunciation." The only defect in this observation is the word "probably." We have really had sufficient, and more than sufficient, of denunciation. That is the preacher's method. He has a sublime faith in the power of exhortation. Nothing un-deceives him. He and his kind have been at it from time immemorial, yet they are constantly telling the world it is as wicked as ever. Every time they say so they demonstrate the absurdity of their methods and the futility of their profession.

It is to Dr. Parker's credit that he sees the folly of more denunciation. But there his wisdom ends. One can only smile at the portentous gravity with which he declares, "I rise to lay before you one of the most important propositions ever made to an assembly." This important proposition is that a Layman's League should be established to win London for Christ. Dr. Parker has small belief in the ordinary political and social remedies, no doubt because he is in a different line of business. He speaks slightly of the unification of London, and derides the "hocus-pocus for taxing ground rents, and providing entertainment and recreation for the people." What he wants is to "organize Christian laymen for the evangelization, and the ultimate sanctification, of the city of cities." It must not be sectarian. Believers of all denominations "must be banded together simply as followers of Christ." They have never done so once in eighteen hundred years, but Dr. Parker is full of unjustified hope. Surely they will make a beginning under the spell of his transcendent eloquence. No doubt we shall soon see the Layman's League—with the ministers at the top, according to the law of gravity. All its members are to be Christians. Whatever else they believe, they are at least to believe

this, that "Atheism is not essential to commercial success." Well, if they don't believe that, they are simply the biggest fools outside the lunatic asylums. Fancy the sweet simplicity, or miraculous audacity, of a preacher who suggests that Atheism is the path to commercial success in the City of London! Be a Christian or a Jew, a Parsee or a Mohammedan; believe in any sort of religion you please, at least to the point of public profession; and you are admitted to the freemasonry of the Mart and the Stock Exchange. But say you are an Atheist, and you are immediately tabooed, ostracised, boycotted, and ruined. This is a commonplace of commercial life, and Dr. Parker's ignorance of it—if he is ignorant—only shows his fitness for dealing with such a subject.

This Layman's League, conceived in ignorance and begotten in pomposity, is to "undertake to meet the wants and solve the problems of the whole City." Every reformer knows what a simple task this is. No doubt the Layman's League will accomplish it in six months. All you want is the right spirit and the right method. And who could imagine the possibility of failure, with Jesus Christ as the boss, and Dr. Parker as his right-hand man, and God Almighty as consulting engineer of the enterprise?

Unfortunately, this magnificent dream is shattered by Dr. Parker's condescension to particulars. The mountain is sublime in its convulsions, but ridiculous when it brings forth a litter of mice! First of all, Dr. Parker proposes to abolish "drinking as a basis of business." There must be no glasses of sherry over bargains. Next, a merchant must not "give a young woman a latchkey as her salary"—though this is hardly a common form of remuneration. Then the prison of Newgate must be pulled down to make room for the headquarters of the Layman's League. No young man must smoke or drink before he is forty years of age; after which, we presume, he will be granted a licence to make up for lost time. No young man must wear a coat which he has not honestly paid for—a matter which the tailors will probably see to without the aid of Dr. Parker's society. Finally, no young man is to be in bed after eight o'clock on Sunday morning; otherwise he won't be in time to hear Dr. Parker at eleven. These are all this gentleman's practical proposals, though he winds up with the light and airy addendum that all the great breweries are to be turned into schools, polytechnics, and Salvation Army Barracks.

"There is no romance in this idea of a Layman's League," says Dr. Parker. Well, we don't think there is; and very little common sense either. Why don't the men of God stick to their own business? They are generally known to be the rankest duffers outside it; and not without reason, for they trade from the college to the cemetery in religious fictions and moral sentimentalities. More real knowledge of human nature is displayed in one good novel, one good play, or one good poem, than in all the sermons published in an entire generation. It is well-nigh impossible for these men of God to become simple citizens outside their sanctuaries. They carry their bias everywhere. "I would make religious character," Dr. Parker says, "the first qualification for a seat in the London County Council." Of course he would. And religious character would be decided by the voice of the Churches. Every candidate would require to have a testimonial from his minister; and John Calvin's ideal Geneva would be reproduced in London.

G. W. FOOTE.

SHAKESPEARE AND ST. GEORGE.

"Soul of the age,
The applause! delight! the wonder of the stage!
My Shakespeare."—BEN JONSON.

THE old Saxon goddess, Eostre, was ill advised in choosing the vernal equinox for her festival. If she had waited for another month, the proverbial vagaries of early springtide would be settled into the full promise of the pageant of summer. As it is, we say with Southey:—

Sweet Spring, thou lingerest, and it should be so—
Late let the fields and gardens blossom out!
Like man, when most with smiles his face is dress'd,
'Tis to deceive; and he who knows ye best,
When most ye promise evermore must doubt.

Easter usually falls too early for a good holiday, when the worker can escape from the city and its cares in full confidence that the weather will be propitious. For the average Englishman, April 23, which happens to be the day of England's Saint George, as well as the birth and death-day of England's greatest mind, would be a much more suitable day, and I hope that some new Lubbock may arise to propose it as a national holiday.

In olden times St. George's Day used to be kept as a holy day in England. Shakespeare himself alludes to it. In the first scene of *1 Henry VI*. Bedford, the Regent of France, says:—

Bonfires in France forthwith I am to make,
To keep our great Saint George's feast withal.

The historical St. George was such a shady character that we take pleasure in the thought that our ancestors celebrated a myth rather than a person. Gibbon has devoted some pungent sentences to the real scoundrel who was born at Epiphania, in Cilicia, in a fuller's shop:—

"From this obscure and servile origin he raised himself by the talents of a parasite: and the patrons whom he assiduously flattered procured for their worthless dependent a lucrative commission, or contract, to supply the army with bacon. His employment was mean; he rendered it infamous. He accumulated wealth by the basest arts of fraud and corruption.....and the choice of the prevailing faction promoted George of Cappadocia to the throne of Athanasius.....The odious stranger, disguising every circumstance of time and place, assumed the mask of a martyr, a saint, and a christian hero, and the infamous George of Cappadocia has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and of the garter."

How the Cappadocian bacon-contractor became patron saint of England is curious. It is said that when Robert, Duke of Normandy, the son of William the Conqueror, was fighting against the Moslems and laying siege to Antioch, which was expected to be relieved by the Saracens, an army appeared, clad in white and with a red cross banner. This was believed to be led by St. George in person, and the Moslems were so frightened that they surrendered the town. Similar stories of heavenly combatants have been told from the time when Sennacherib's host was said to have been slaughtered by an angel of the Lord. This led to George being regarded as the patron saint of English crusaders. Richard Cœur de Lion is said to have popularized his name, and, under the name and ensign of St. George, Edward III., 1344, instituted the most noble Order of the Garter, whose college is in the Chapel of St. George at Windsor. Of course the hero of Antioch is just as mythical as the dragon with whom he is constantly associated, although at Damascus they used to show the very stone from which he mounted his horse when he went forth to slay the monster. It is, indeed, the dragon which gives us the key to the real position of the saint. The dragon figures constantly in myth as the symbol of evil, especially of winter, in which it appears as the guardian of concealed treasures under the earth. The image of serpents and dragons is stamped on all fables connected with the underworld, and the simple earthworms may have given rise to the serpents coiled on the chariot wheels of Proserpine.

From the old plays in which St. George figured first of the seven champions of Christendom, it is evident that his festival really continued a solar feast of the week, in which the principal figure, that of St. George, represents the sun who conquers the dragon of winter and releases the beautiful floral princess of spring. The myth of St. George and the Dragon is essentially the same as that of

Merodach and Tiamat, Bel and the Dragon, Horus and Apep, Apollo and the Python, Perseus and the sea-monster, St. Michael and the Devil. St. Patrick banishing the snakes from Ireland is, perhaps, a form of the same myth.

It would be appropriate for the old solar festival to be revived in honor of the glorious sun of our literature; the true king of glory whose resplendent beams illuminate the entire English-reading world. When we have got rid of our bondage to monkish saints and gibbeted gods we may perhaps consider the propriety of celebrating the great high priest of humanity—Shakespeare, the author of our English Bible. His natal day is surely more worthy of being kept in remembrance than those of the semi-mythical saints and heroes which Christianity has delighted to honor. Ingersoll says, with his accustomed fervor:—

"Shakespeare is as far above the Bible as is the sea above an orchestra, or the song of the mocking-bird above the pipes of Pan. A purer, nobler, deeper philosophy fell from the lips of Shakespeare's clowns than is to be found in the whole of the Old Testament. If Shakespeare had been read as the Bible has been read, the people of this great world would be twice as wise as they are now—may be three times."

Shakespeare teaches by pleasing. His lessons sink into our hearts just because they are not didactic. He stands for humanity. His characters are as varied as nature itself. He knows the burden of sovereignty, and he feels for the suffering poor that "bide the pelting of the pitiless storm." He unites male strength with feminine tenderness. His is ever the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin, and he does us the best of services in enlarging our sympathies and our knowledge of the human heart.

Shakespeare represents the springtime of English literature, when, bursting from the night of mediævalism, it spread sunshine and beauty around. His birthday happily comes at the season of flowers, when daffodils unfold and

Violets dim;
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cythera's breath;

when the lark at heaven's gate sings and floods a thousand acres of blue sky with gladsome melody; when each tree is bursting into leaf, and birds are carolling on every bough; when the white apple-blossom peeps out, and the first notes of the cuckoo are heard;

When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadow with delight.

"The sweet o' the year," as Autolycus calls the spring, is indeed a fitting time to celebrate the poet of nature—the greatest genius of our world. J. M. WHEELER.

FANATICISM OF RELIGION.

It is a popular allegation among professed Christians that "man is a religious being," and that some form of religion is universally accepted. This is one of the many misleading theories to which Christians resort in their advocacy. For, supposing the contention were accurate, it would be of little service to the followers of Christ, inasmuch as it would furnish no evidence that man was a *Christian* being, and no one would be foolish enough to claim that the belief in Christianity is even approaching universality. The Christian doctrines taught in the Christian churches have but comparatively few adherents at the present day, and with the spread of modern thought these few are becoming less and less. To talk, therefore, about "the religious nature of man" being a proof that Christianity is a fact is utterly useless.

But the truth is that ample evidence is at our command to show that a belief in any form of supernatural religion is far from being universal. Sir John Lubbock, in his *Origin of Civilization*, writes: "It has been asserted over and over again that there is no race of men so degraded as to be entirely without a religion—without some idea of a Deity. So far from this being true, the very reverse is the case. Many—we might almost say all—of the most savage races are, according to the nearly universal testi-

mony of travellers, in this condition" (page 468). Herbert Spencer also, in his *Principles of Sociology*, says: "Not only by theologians at large, but also by some who have treated religion rationally, it is held that man is by constitution a religious being.....But this doctrine, once almost universally accepted, has been rudely shaken by the facts which psychologists and anthropologists have brought to light. There is clear proof that minds which have from infancy been cut off by bodily defects from intercourse with the minds of adults are devoid of religious ideas" (vol. iii., chap. 1., pp. 1 and 4). Both the above writers quote numerous authorities in support of their statements. One feature of the fanaticism of religion is manifested in the tendency it has to induce its votaries to believe that they have discovered the truth, and that, therefore, it must be universally accepted as such. If these enthusiasts were to exercise their reason a little more, it is possible they would learn that no one belief upon speculative questions could ever be accepted by the entire human race. Moreover, it might also occur to them that the truth of principles depends not upon the number of their adherents, but rather upon the nature and power for good of the principles themselves.

What is religion? When the Church was a huge monopoly it arrogated to itself the absolute right to every factor in the improvement of the individual and in the elevation of the community. Not only did the Church seek to control the principles that regulate society, but it perverted certain words from their legitimate meaning, and applied to them ecclesiastical significations. Thus, the term religion came to be regarded as having purely a theological reference, indicating some form of belief in the alleged supernatural. The growth of the knowledge of evolution, however, has showed the fallacy of this claim. It is now recognised by some of the ablest writers of the day that religion, when properly understood, has no necessary association with the superstition of theology. The term religion is derived from the Latin word *religio*, which means "to bind." Hence, among the Romans religion had no necessary connection with worship or faith, but simply "signified the binding of man to do justice by and to the State, as a member of the community." Max Müller says: "There are some late writers who use *religio* in the sense of faith.....but in classical Latin *religio* never has that meaning. We can clearly see that what the Roman expressed by *religio* was chiefly the moral or practical, not the speculative or philosophical, side of religion." Theologians, however, employ the term in a very different sense. Thus, as Müller also observes: "When we speak of the Jewish or the Christian religion we mean a body of doctrines handed down by tradition, or in canonical books, and containing all that constitutes the faith of Jew, Christian, or Hindoo." But the application of the word religion is not now limited to theological doctrines, or to the belief in any form of the alleged supernatural. Müller speaks of "Atheistic religions," and refers to the religion of Buddha, which, he says, "was from the beginning purely Atheistic." We have also the "religion of humanity," and many other "natural religions." Practically a man's religion consists in his adherence to the highest moral principle by which he rules his life. It requires no God, no devil, no priests, or any theological creeds and dogmas. True religion consists in noble actions, consistent conduct, and sincerity of profession. As Dr. Kalisch remarks, the religion of the future "must renounce uncertain traditions, imaginary narratives, and lifeless ceremonies; but it must, on the other hand, foster the purest and highest virtues of the human heart, and must lead to an active life of devotion, love, self-control, and cheerful sacrifice.....Henceforth, therefore, we do not desire a religion of fear, which is the fruit of delusion, but of love, which flows from intelligence; not a religion of vigor, which breeds servitude, but of joy, which bears witness of the freedom of the mind and heart; not a religion of contention, which persecutes others by the haughty presumption of infallibility, but of peace, which respects all honest convictions if they can but show works of charity and unselfish devotions." To such a religion as is here described Secularists can have no objection. It was long since proclaimed by the brave Freethinker, Thomas Paine, in those memorable words: "To do good is my religion."

It may be readily granted that the principal theological religions of the world have possessed good features; but,

unfortunately, their better parts have been more than counteracted by elements of a most disastrous nature. And perhaps religion has suffered from no greater drawback than from fanaticism. That drawback has been extremely dangerous in its influence upon the human mind, filling life with gloom, and overshadowing death with groundless terrors. By fanaticism is meant perverted emotion and excessive enthusiasm. Herbert Spencer truly says: "Excited feelings make us wrongly estimate probability, and they make us wrongly estimate importance." Under the sway of the fanatical spirit, reason and judgment are deprived of their normal power, and phantoms are substituted for realities. Fanaticism upon any subject is a deplorable evil, and should in any case be avoided. But when it is associated with religion it assumes its worst form, for under its influence the most fiendish cruelties have been inflicted, and the worst forms of outrage have been committed. Inspired by the false notion that their conduct was sanctioned by God's will, religious fanatics have stifled every humane feeling, set aside all sense of justice, and perpetrated acts of cruelty revolting in their nature and diabolical in their execution. Take the Albigensian war, which was the outcome of religious fanaticism. "Never," says Dean Milman, "in the history of man, were the great eternal principles of justice, the faith of treaties, common humanity, so trampled under foot as in this war." Earl Russell also states, in his *Essays on the History of the Christian Religion*, that in this massacre "neither sex nor age was spared. From twenty to fifty thousand persons were slain. The cruel command was uttered, 'Slay them all; God will know his own! The Monk of Vaux Cernay, the historian of these atrocities, says: 'Our people put to the sword all whom they could find, slaying them with fire and sword. For which blessed be the Lord, who delivers to us some of the wicked, although not all'" (pp. 144-5). This was the exercise of uncontrolled enthusiasm with a vengeance! There is no lack of instances where (if possible) even worse crimes than those narrated above have been committed in consequence of religious fanaticism. To some of these we will refer in our article next week.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

MRS. HUMPHREY WARD, introducing her translation of Harnack's famous pamphlet, *The Apostles' Creed*, which stirred up all Germany a few years ago, refers her readers who desire information on the first or primitive stages of Christian belief and teaching, comparable to Dr. Harnack's with regard to the second stage, to *The Apostolic Age*, by Karl Weizsacker, the veteran Professor who, on Baur's death, succeeded to the famous chair held by that great pioneer in Tübingen University. *The Apostolic Age*, she says, "could not have been written in Baur's day, but it is the ripened fruit of seed sown by the Tübingen school."

"Since Baur's time," says the Oriel Professor of Interpretation of Scripture at Oxford, "no such work has been produced. It is capable of regenerating English study." A memorial, signed by some of the foremost scholars, classical, theological, and philosophical, in England and Scotland, was addressed to the Hibbert trustees, asking them to undertake the translation of the work; though it must not be supposed that all the signers of the memorial endorsed Dr. Weizsacker's doctrinal position. The work, which is now accessible to English readers in the "Theological Translation Library," is furnished with a preface by Dr. A. B. Bruce, who, after extolling its merits as exhibiting, not only the learning we expect in a first-class German author, but a moderation and soundness of judgment which are by no means common in Germany or anywhere else, observes that, while readers may dissent from Weizsacker's views on some points, as the resurrection of Jesus and the historical value of the Book of Acts, his treatment of them is nevertheless "scientific in spirit."

Now, since it is precisely a really scientific treatment of these matters that one most wishes to see, one turns naturally to that portion of the book first. There can be no question that Weizsacker's treatment of the alleged resurrection of Jesus is a fine example of the scientific method. Starting from the principle that the alleged resurrection should be judged from the earliest accounts

of it, he takes Paul's narrative (1 Cor. xv.) as a basis, and proceeds to show, both from Paul and the Gospels, that Scripture itself, rightly understood, negatives the idea of a bodily resurrection.

Paul, in order to prove the fact of the resurrection, relates the appearance of Jesus to his disciples after his death. "Now, the circumstance that he passes over the events at the grave is striking," says Dr. Weizsacker, "if only because he has just mentioned the burial, but chiefly because they would have served his purpose best. In the proof which he undertakes so earnestly, and carries out with such precision, the absence of the first and most important link is in the highest degree suspicious. The only possible explanation is that the Apostle was ignorant of its existence. And this is important; for Paul's knowledge of these things must come from the heads of the primitive Church. Therefore it is the primitive Church itself that was ignorant of any such tradition. And, still further, this tradition is directly negated by the fact that, among the Christophanies recorded by Paul, that of Peter is absolutely the first. If the series of appearances which prove the resurrection began with Peter's experience, those at the grave which exclude Peter cannot have preceded it." "On the other hand," continues our author, "the appearances at the grave are empty and meaningless, even in the oldest form in which they are given. They are a mere piece of display.....a later product of the legend.....It is a historical fact that the men of whom Paul tells us, and among whom he himself is included, were not convinced that they had seen the risen Christ.....But no proof is to be got from this for a bodily Christophany."

Paul does not himself relate the experience he had when he saw Christ; but there are three accounts of it in the Acts, which are to be taken as embodying the conception formed of it by his successors. "Now it is in any event significant that in all three what the eye beheld was merely a flash of light from heaven. Nothing more, therefore, was required for the Christophany which, so far, presents a striking resemblance to.....the luminous visions of God vouchsafed, as they themselves believed, to Jewish rabbis. The additional feature, the voice which Paul heard, first specializes the manifestation. But in their simplest form the words express nothing but the conviction that it was Jesus with whom he had to do. They therefore simply state what was passing in his own mind. When to this is added in two of the narratives the direction to await and receive his calling in Damascus, while in the third this ordination proceeds from Jesus during the vision itself, this only proves that the description has been influenced throughout by the free reflection of the historian."

Since Paul seems to have had, at least in later times, a severe ailment in his eyes (Gal. iv. 15), that probably had something to do with his seeing Jesus. Paul's evidence must then be counted out, even if he had not said in so many words that flesh and blood shall not enter the kingdom of God, proving that a physical resurrection was to him an absurdity.

It is remarkable that the experience of Peter, the event which, according to Paul, was the first, and the basis of all the rest, is for a long time entirely absent from the history, and, though adduced later, never obtains its rightful prominence in the Gospels. "It is impossible to imagine a more convincing proof that the history was entirely supplanted by legend. So strong was the tendency that the reverence for Peter, in other respects one of the most powerful motives of the older narrative, could not prevail against it. Peter's actual experience was no longer sufficient. It could not be pressed into the service of the prevailing belief and the reflections of the succeeding age."

The oldest tradition of Jesus's teaching is a safe guide to thought current in early Christian circles. Now, there can be no doubt that, according to this tradition, the souls of the pious were believed to live in a new kind of body, a body of an essentially heavenly quality. This is expressed in Jesus's answer to the question of the Sadducees about marriage: "They shall then be as the angels of God." This is, in fact, their resurrection.

The tradition also is that, as regards belief in a future state, Jesus and his followers were on the side of the Pharisees, who believed in a resurrection of the spirit, but not of the body. Besides, the story of the transfiguration is exclusively designed to show Jesus transformed at this

particular moment, even in his earthly life, into a heavenly form of light. The only possible inference is that Jesus, when he should appear after death, would do so in such a form.

Dr. Weizsacker's statements, which I have greatly condensed, prove beyond a doubt that a resurrection of the body, whether of Jesus or of others at the last day, is not what Paul believed in, is not what Peter believed in, is not what the Church in its earliest days believed in, nor is it what Jesus himself believed in and taught to his disciples. In other words, what they all disbelieved in has become one of the chief dogmas of Christianity.

So much for the resurrection. The book of Acts, except in the personal narrative of Paul's companion in the latter part of the book, contains much fiction and little history. The figures which represent the growth of the first Christian community—120, 3,000, 5,000—"are all artificial. The history of the forty days (Acts i. 3) belongs to the period when the legends of the resurrection underwent their latest modification." The account of the miracle at Pentecost "represents the speech with tongues in a way that is contradicted by the actual history of the gift." The story of the execution of Ananias and Sapphira "can lay no claim to be considered historical." Gamaliel's words "contain such manifest errors on the part of the historian that all historical foundation must be denied them. From this single example we are entitled to lay down the opinion that, at least so far as this portion of the book is concerned, the author of the Acts has freely invented such speeches." "After all this, there is but little left from which to construct a genuine history of the period."

But this negative criticism, while in itself very important, is only a secondary feature. The Gospel stories, though quite deceptive as they stand, furnish to the true critic historical materials of great value. Recognising them as legends of a later time, he sees that they must have been created in accordance with the opinions and practices of that time, and must, therefore, afford materials for the history of the time in which they were written. To illustrate: The stories of Jesus sending out his apostles, the twelve and the seventy, are unhistorical. The minute directions for their journey and conduct, and the predictions of what should befall them, never came from Jesus at all. What is to be inferred from them is, that the first missionaries, after the death of Jesus, believing in his speedy return, hurried from house to house, and city to city, delivering their message neither to the Gentiles nor Samaritans, but only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel; that they were without money or means; that they were hated and persecuted on every side; and that, when persecuted in one city, they fled to another, lest their work be still unaccomplished when their Lord should return, for the time was short and redemption nigh (see Matthew x.). The process by which all this was referred back to the month and time of Jesus is to be reversed, and we get a spirited and historical picture of the Church as it was a few years after the death of Jesus.

Why should the apparently harmless sect of Christians be singled out for almost incessant persecution? Contemporary writers agree that the Christians, even if specific acts could not be proved against them, deserved punishment for their general animosity to mankind; in fact, it soon became the general opinion that the fraternity of the Christians was a union for criminal purposes. Justin Martyr dates these calumnies from the period immediately following the Crucifixion, and there must have been, at any rate, something in the faith or practices of the Christians at a very early date which caused such an opinion to be formed of them. Now, the kernel of the early teaching was that of Jesus himself. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. This involved the destruction of existing kingdoms and the renovation of the world; and it was probably the expression of this faith which brought them into trouble with the authorities, who would be most likely to suspect that the Christians did not merely expect a general conflagration and destruction, as something which their God would bring to pass, but that they themselves meditated it and were laboring to effect it. To the formation of such an opinion the universal belief in magic, coupled with the secrecy of the Christian assemblies, would contribute. It was, then, the Christian faith itself which enabled Nero, with a show of plausibility, to charge the pernicious sect with the burning of Rome.

Among the books wrongfully attributed to the Apostles are the Gospel of John, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Colossians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Peter, and 1, 2, 3 John. 2 Thessalonians is a downright forgery; and Revelation, like all the rest of the Jewish and Christian apocalypses, bears a fictitious name. None of the Synoptic Gospels were compiled until after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The development of Christianity was from the first perfectly natural, and the New Testament itself, in its earliest and most authentic portions, discredits the miraculous element. That such a book as *The Apostolic Age* should be so highly esteemed in influential ecclesiastical circles is a hopeful sign of the times.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

C. L. ABBOTT.

THE PAGAN ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

(See page 212.)

HAVING shown that Bacchus, *alias* Jes, Latinized Jesus, was transported from a port on the Black Sea to Alexandria about B.C. 280, by Ptolemy Soter, the object being to harmonize the religions of Egypt and the lately conquered provinces of Greece with the parent government; then all those vast regions, with the whole of Europe and the north of Africa, becoming subordinate to Rome so early as forty years before the Christian era, it may be well to get an understanding of the prevalent religious faith when "our Savior" was born.

Ask 1,000 Christian clergymen, "Did churches originate with Jesus, or his followers, and was the doctrine of mediation, atonement, a Savior, the Eucharist, and baptism peculiar to their creed?" and 999 out of the number will answer without equivocation in the affirmative, so ignorant are they of the real facts relating to their own beginning.

On page 240 of the Rev. Charles Bigg, D.D.'s *Eight Lectures on the Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, preached in the Oxford University in 1886, under the provisions of the Rev. John Bampton's will, providing for an annual course of such lectures, the expressed object being "to confirm and establish the Christian faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics," we find the following statement, and copy verbatim:—

"The disciples of Mithra formed an organized church, with a developed hierarchy. They possessed the ideas of Mediation, Atonement, and a Saviour, who is human and yet divine, and not only the idea, but a doctrine, of the Future Life. They had a Eucharist and a Baptism; and other curious analogies might be pointed out between their system and the Church of Christ. Most of these conceptions, no doubt, are integral parts of a religion much older than Christianity."

In a note on page 237 Dr. Bigg had said:—

"The birthday of Mithra, the Sol Invictus [the Invincible Sun], was December 25.....It may be the heathen festival was retained under a heathen name from a politic desire to soften the change from the old order to the new.

Since we have the "Assistant Chaplain of Corpus Christi College" on the witness stand, and as he seems to be a favorite of Oxford University, with upwards of twenty allied colleges, wherein he graduated, we beg leave to make quotations from these "Bampton Lectures" to show that Mithra of Persia, Osiris of Egypt, and all the sun-gods of which Bacchus, otherwise known as Jes, was a specimen, are one and the same. After stating that the ancient Roman mythology had perished at the close of the Republic, when Julius Caesar had been elevated to the throne, and that the old Greek and Roman deities had been merged into angels or demons, and that Jupiter himself had disappeared and been succeeded by "a god of Syrian, or Persian, or Egyptian nationality," he continues:—

"The altars of the Great Mother, of Isis and Serapis, of Mithra, are to be found all over the world, from Bactria to Gaul [now France], in Northumberland, on the Rhine, in Numidia, wherever the Roman eagles flew, in the provinces, in Rome, in Cæsar's palace."

The Roman eagle graced the standard of that great country, which was borne at the head of its armies. In the second century of our era, of which period the Rev.

Dr. Bigg was then discoursing, all the civilized world was subordinate to Rome. Let us continue this quotation from page 236:—

"Those Oriental Gods, though many in name, are in reality but one. As we gaze upon them they seem to melt into one another. Who is the Syrian goddess? She is the Aramic Astarte, the Babylonian Mylitta; she is the Great Mother, she is Isis, Universal Nature, the maternal feminine aspect of God. And God is the Sun, whose ray-crowned head is to be seen on Roman coins from the reign of Commodus [died A.D. 192] to that of Constantine. Mithra, Elagabalus, are all the same. They are the fatherly, fostering, masculine side of the Divine, aptly figured by the orb of day."

This Elagabalus of Dr. Bigg is Heliogabalus in Lemprière, and in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He was a Syro-Phœnician sun-god, the same in reality as Bacchus, who was transferred to Egypt under the name of Jes, and became Serapis, the resurrected Osiris, and, shall we say, the Jesus of Christian story? And was the Aramic Astarte, the Babylonian Mylitta, and Isis of Egypt, identical with the Virgin Mary? Let us reserve an opinion until we have examined all the facts. But, possibly, the key which awakened the attention of the writer, and which has led him through many intricate mazes in his search for truth, will interest the reader. The Emperor Hadrian came to the Roman throne A.D. 117. In A.D. 119 he set out on a tour of inspection through his Eastern provinces, and first visited Egypt. From Alexandria he wrote his brother-in-law, Servianus, a Roman consul, as follows:—

"Hadrian Augustus, to Servianus, the Consul, Greeting:—As for Egypt, which you were praising to me, dearest Servianus, I have found its people wholly light, wavering, and flying after every breath of a report. Those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are devoted to Serapis. There is no ruler of a Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no presbyter of the Christians, who is not a mathematician, an augur, and a soothsayer. The very patriarch himself, when he came into Egypt, was by some said to worship Serapis, and by others to worship Christ. As a race of men they are seditious, vain, and spiteful; as a body, wealthy and prosperous, of whom nobody lives in idleness."

This morsel of valuable knowledge was preserved to our time by the pen of Flavius Vopiscus, a native of Syracuse, who wrote the lives of Aurelian, Tacitus, and others, about A.D. 303. We find a dozen variant translations, all agreeing in substance; but the quotation is made from Clement's *Egypt*, p. 277, the author of which is clearly a Christian writer. This remnant of history must have escaped destruction by merest accident, when whole libraries were destroyed to suppress the real history of the beginnings of Christianity. As a broken tooth, or a simple button accidentally torn from the clothes of a burglar, in the hands of a detective, has led to the exposure and conviction of criminals, so this little relic of the ages shall serve as a clue to the unfolding of the giant swindle of all the centuries.

—*Progressive Thinker.*

ALL GONE.

Whar's my Adam 'nd Ebe?
Make ole nigger 'b'liebe
Warn't none? Preacher man say
"Story all done away."
O my lamb!

Whar's my apple so red,
Turned po' Missy Ebe's head!
'Nd de ole serpent? "All lies,
So say de preacher man, wise.
O my lamb!

Whar's my Jonah, dat groan
In de whale's belly all 'lone
"Couldn't done dat way,"
So de new preacher man say.
O my lamb!

Dey take my apple, take my Ebe,
Take my Adam 'nd snake dat deceibe,
Take my Jonah, take my whale,
'Nd bust my 'lijion. Po' nigger wail.
O my lamb!

ACID DROPS.

PASSION WEEK brought the usual crowds to the most fashionable Paris churches, at some of which there was a lot of pious tomfoolery. In a basement grotto behind the high altar at St. Roch a life-size wax figure of the buried Christ was exhibited, with the burial party standing around him—doubtless awaiting the resurrection. "Visitors," says the *Daily News* correspondent, "are mostly persons of wealth or ample means. Files of private carriages are drawn up in the sideways to east and west of the church." In Paris, at any rate, as Zola says, the Catholic Church is no longer the Church of the people. With them it is dead beyond hope of revival.

The Archbishop of Paris had some interesting performances at Notre Dame. On Holy Thursday he publicly washed the feet of twelve poor men. This is considered a demonstration of humility. But it looks absurd, not to say hypocritical, when we read that the dirty feet of those twelve pariahs underwent a preliminary cleansing before they were put under the nose of the pious Archbishop. We quite approve his taste in the matter; what we object to is the humbug of the business.

Clement Scott has climbed down. He expresses "regret to the ladies of the theatrical profession and to the theatrical profession at large" for what he said about them. He spoke at a moment of "great personal strain." He now withdraws the statements he made, and hopes, etc., etc. This is a parliamentary way of saying he was an infernal fool. No doubt the theatrical profession will believe him.

Saint David said in his haste that all men were liars. This included himself, and he was probably right in one instance. Clement Scott said that all stage ladies were harlots. Saint David was a Jew. Clement Scott is a Roman Catholic.

The *Irish World*, of New York, in its issue for March 19 gave currency to all the old bogus tales of St. Patrick's life and labors. It tells us there is "no doubt as to the place of his birth," although it has been fixed in about half-a-dozen different lands, and gravely relates how, when he prayed for food, "immediately a drove of swine appeared to view," whence we may certainly conclude that St. Patrick was not like his Savior, one of the circumcised.

The removal of thick incrustations of dirt and varnish from the old woodwork above the outer central doors of the northern porch of Westminster Abbey shows that the wood is thickly penetrated with a great quantity of small shot, and bears bullet marks. The oaken doors of the church of St. Clement Danes in the Strand have been riddled in much the same manner. Possibly these were occasioned by the churches being sanctuaries for rascals.

From the earliest Saxon times the sanctuary of Westminster—or, as Stowe calls it, "the Abbey Church Sanctuary," which he specified as "the church, churchyard, close, etc."—formed a place of refuge for offenders of all kinds, until it was suppressed, with all other sanctuaries, in the reign of James I. "But the right of asylum," says Dean Stanley, "rendered the whole precinct a vast 'Cave of Adullam' for all the distressed and discontented of the metropolis who desired, according to the phrase of the time, 'to take Westminster.'" Long after the suppression, the neighborhood of the Abbey was a hotbed of iniquity and vice, and it may be that during this period, if not before it, the woodwork of the northern porch suffered from over-free firing.—*Daily News* (April 6).

Some continental scientists, including the astronomers of the Vatican Observatory, have proposed to fix Easter from the year 1900 on the third Sunday after the equinox—that is to say, after March 21, the moon no longer influencing the date. The festival would then only vary between April 4 and 11, instead of between March 22 and April 25, as now. By thus fixing Easter it is hoped also to cause the Greek Orthodox Church to abandon the old Calendar from the year 1900, the difference between it and the Gregorian increasing from that year from twelve to thirteen days. The Pope is said to be very favorably disposed towards the project, which would remove one link of the evidence that Easter is a most ancient Pagan festival.

The *Daily News* of April 9 reports that the re-enacting of the Good Friday custom of flogging an effigy of Judas Iscariot was carried out with more than usual circumstance aboard a vessel moored in the "Pool." For a long number of years the Mediterranean sailors attached to those trading vessels in the different London docks had been in the habit of celebrating their national custom of flogging, hanging, and afterwards burning the emblem of the "Betrayal"; but, owing to the disorder caused by the assemblage of roughs

and loafers, and consequent scenes of riot, and, further, the contravention and its attendant danger of the fire regulations, the authorities put a stop to the proceedings.

Until Good Friday this order had obtained, but, owing to the fact that the officers and men of a vessel moored in the "Pool" had signified their sympathy with the custom, advantage was taken to celebrate the ceremony, and without offending the law. Accordingly, shortly after 11.30 a considerable number of Maltese and Portuguese sailors boarded the boat, and, taking a log of wood, invested it with a sailor's "jumper" and a red-knitted hat as a nautical costume; they then proceeded to revile, kick, and spit on the figure, and after a time a rope was placed around it, when it was hoisted to the masthead, and then immediately lowered on to the deck, when it was again subjected to every indignity possible, in which all heartily co-operated. Re-hoisted to the masthead, it was dropped thrice overboard, and, being drawn on deck, was summarily cut up and burned.

This Good Friday custom obtains among all Mediterranean seamen, and its revival in the "Pool" of London, after a lapse of over twenty years, seemed to afford all concerned intense satisfaction. In 1874 the *Times* reported a similar ceremony on Good Friday in the London Docks. Many authorities hold that our old friends Punch and Judy are but survivals of the *Pontius et Judæi* of the mystery plays, and there are not wanting those who find in the ritual of the plays the origin of the Christian myths.

"Several clergymen," says *Reynolds's*, "have recently dropped dead in church. Will it be said that these men were more sinful than others? Yet that is exactly what would be said by multitudes of churchgoers had a Secularist dropped dead on his platform."

The Dean of Hereford, in his sermon last Sunday, referred to the strained relations between America and Spain. Much was said about the evils and horrors of war. The preacher regarded them as "striking proofs of the fall of man." This is extremely good in view of the fact that so much of the fighting in this world has been instigated or fomented by religion. Jesus Christ himself came not to send peace, but a sword.

"Is the Church doomed?" asks the good old *Rock*. In reply it shakes its head and mutters oracularly. It fears that the "conspirators" within the Church are too successful in "making religion contemptible in the eyes of thoughtful men," and prophesies that, unless something is done to abate this evil, the Church "will not last far into the twentieth century." All we have to say is one word—Amen.

Mr. Kensit, who tried to stop the crucifix-kissing at Kensington, was brought up the next morning at the West London Police-court and charged with brawling in church. The vicar, who gave evidence, said among other pleasant things that Mr. Kensit's ejaculations were rather curious—such as "Hallelujah and my wife," "Hallelujah and my hat." Finally the case was adjourned for seven days, by which time Mr. Kensit hopes to get some Church dignitaries in the witness-box.

Personally we have no sort of sympathy with this Mr. Kensit. To us he is simply the publisher of a dirty libel on Colonel Ingersoll. It was a gratuitous act of malignity on his part to publish that scurrilous thing over here in England. Perhaps we ought not to say "gratuitous," as he probably looked for a reasonable profit on the transaction.

Lieutenant-Colonel P. F. Robertson, late of the Gordon Highlanders, continues writing in the London *Echo* in support of flogging soldiers and whipping children. This gentleman is a good Christian and appeals to the Bible, which he says is a "checkmate" to his opponents. Of course he is quite right on this point, and we are obliged to him for insisting that the Bible is in favor of his brutality. Still, he is not quite logical—or perhaps we should say thorough-going. He does not propose to extend the blessings of flogging to officers, but approves of confining them to privates. But this is surely unfair. Why should the officers be robbed of their share in this felicity? Why not pass it right round?

"Deeds of Heroism," as the newspaper headlines put it, were performed by our troops out in the Soudan on Good Friday. All very fine, gentlemen; but, considering that the Britishers, apart from the Egyptians, lost three officers and eighteen privates, while the enemy lost about three thousand, it looks very much like a massacre. The poor Mohammedans faced death with quite as much "heroism" as the Christians, only they had no first-class artillery and murderous Gatling guns. It is by these agencies that the Cross triumphs over the Crescent.

Lord Hillingdon died suddenly in Wilton Parish Church, Wilts. He was on a visit to the Earl of Pembroke, in whose pew he was sitting when seized with illness, as the choir and clergy were entering the church for morning service. Death was almost instantaneous. There is no moral.

A flood in Illinois destroyed a great part of Shawneetown. The people had no warning of the calamity. Many hurriedly sought refuge on the housetops, but those who were in the streets were caught by the rush of water, and about a hundred persons perished. This is another illustration of the ways of Providence.

Memoirs of a Highland Lady, just published by Murray, contains some wretched nonsense about Shelley. Elizabeth Grant, the heroine of this book, visited Oxford in 1810, her aunt being the wife of Dr. Griffiths, Master of University College, Oxford, from which Shelley was expelled for writing a pamphlet on Atheism. According to this lady's account, apparently written many years afterwards, Shelley was "the ringleader in every species of mischief" within the College walls. She goes on to say that "when he proceeded so far as to paste up Atheistical squibs on the chapel doors it was considered necessary to expel him privately, out of regard for Sir Timothy Shelley, the father, who, having been written to concerning his wayward son, arrived in much anxiety, had a long conference with my uncle in the study, and then Sir Timothy and his son left Oxford together."

All this stuff about Shelley is quoted as a tit-bit in the last number of the *Weekly Sun*. It is untrue, however, in every detail. Shelley did not paste up Atheistical squibs on the chapel doors; he was not expelled privately, but publicly; he did not leave Oxford with his father, but with Thomas Jefferson Hogg, who was expelled with him; and, instead of going home, he and Hogg went to London and took lodgings in Poland-street. That "long conference" between Shelley's father and Dr. Griffiths is therefore purely imaginary. Altogether, it may be said that Elizabeth Grant's account of Shelley is a fine illustration of the looseness with which Christians permit themselves to write about Atheists.

Marie Corelli, the pious novelist, who professes the utmost contempt for her critics, has been foolish enough to start an action for libel against one of them—Mr. W. P. Ryan, the author of *Literary London*. Mr. Ryan says he cannot take Marie Corelli seriously, and she appears to think he may be made to do so by her solicitors. Fortunately, the "libeller" stands firm, and if the case goes to trial we may expect plenty of food for laughter. It will probably be the comedy of the season.

Superstition is still strong among "civilized" people. When it was heard that the body of Wolff Joel, who was murdered at Johannesburg, was to be brought to England on board the *Briton*, most of the passengers refused to travel with a corpse, which had therefore to be transferred to another steamer. Of course, the poor dead body couldn't do them any sort of injury, but the presence of a corpse on board a ship is deemed unlucky. No doubt this is a survival of that fear of the dead which Mr. Grant Allen's first led to burial, and afterwards to the heaping of stones upon the grave. The stones were meant to keep the corpse down. A heavy slab over a grave is now regarded as a mark of piety, but originally it was a sign of terror.

Mr. Vincent Smith, a learned antiquary of the Bengal Civil Service, has published in the *Allahabad Pioneer* an account of the discovery of the home of Gautama Buddha at Kapilavastu, where an inscribed pillar, erected by the Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C., fixes with certainty the site. It is in Nepaulese territory, as is also the Lumbini Garden, the traditional birthplace of Gautama. The relics found in a coffin buried under eighteen feet of masonry are declared by an inscription to be those of Buddha himself, and altogether the evidence is fully more complete as to the real existence of the great teacher than any that can be adduced for the peculiar events said to have happened in Palestine.

The Rev. Samuel M. Zwemer has been interesting the ladies of the Victoria Institute by a paper on "The Star Worshippers of Mesopotamia," the people dwelling along the lower Euphrates and Tigris, and variously known as Sabaeans, Mandaeans, Nasoreans, and Christians of St. John, as they recognise Johnny the Baptist, while rejecting Isa or Jesus as an impostor. Though now only numbering four or five thousand, they have always been, and remain, entirely distinct from the Jews, Moslems, and Christians, among whom they have dwelt for centuries.

Mr. Zwemer thought these people represented the oldest form of idolatry—i.e., star worship. Their women go about unveiled, and have a more masculine cast of features than

Moslem women; they are also rather taller. At present only the few among them can read or write the language (the Mandaitic), although all can speak it, and from religious motives they refuse to teach those outside of their faith even the first lesson, except secretly.

What their real faith or cult is it was difficult to tell. That they turn to the North Star when they pray, and "baptize" every Sunday, was all that Moslems or Christians could tell. One narrator, however, declares that towards midnight the Star Worshippers, men and women, come slowly down to the river side, disrobe, and bathe in a circular reservoir. On emerging from the water, each robes him or herself in white, crosses to an open space in front of the tabernacle, where the priest places the sacred book, "Sidra Rabba," upon the altar. The high priest then takes one of two live pigeons handed to him, extends his hands to the polar star, upon which he fixes his eyes, and lets the birds fly, exclaiming, "In the name of the Living One, blessed be primitive light, the ancient light, Divinity self-created."

Then follows "the high mystery," as they term their communion. On a charcoal fire some dough of barley-meal and oil is quickly baked. A deacon seizes the remaining pigeon, cuts its throat, and strains the neck of the innocent bird over the wafers to allow four small drops to fall on each in the form of a cross. Amid the continued reading of the Liturgy these wafers are taken round to the worshippers by the priests, and "popped" into the mouths of the members, with the words, "Marked be thou with the mark of the Living One." Here one sees Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, as it were, engrafted on one Chaldean trunk; gnosticism, star worship, baptisms, love feast, sacrifice, orinthomancy, etc. It is quite possible the Sabaeans represent an earlier form of Christianity, and their sacred book, "The Book of Adam," may throw light on some early Christian doctrines.

The *Tablet* prints an account of "A Lourdes Miracle" from a nameless Irish nun in Paris, written to the mother of a nameless English convent. A Spanish woman said to be suffering from "incurable affection of the spinal cord" was dipped in the piscina and brought out trembling with cold, but after the litany was recited she exclaimed that she was cured, and "almost ran to the grotto to give thanks to our Lady, and then make a votive offering of her crutch." It is to be hoped the lady will not need her crutch again when she returns to Spain.

Goodman Stead, in his *If Christ Came to Chicago*, said not a word of the horrors of the *abattoirs* there, in one alone of which there are killed and cut up in the course of a year one million and eighty thousand oxen, one million seven hundred and fifty pigs, and six hundred and twenty-five thousand sheep. It is the Chicago boast that a hog enters an *abattoir* to come out in an hour ham, sausage, hair-grease, and binding for Bibles. If Christ went to Chicago, we wonder if he would have anything to say on the problem of life living by wholesale slaughter.

Everyone knows that a large proportion of the churches in the City of London are practically attended only by those who find a business account in attending them. Yet not only are the high stipends of their rectors maintained, but they have an allowance from the Charity Commissioners for Church maintenance. The issue of an order suggesting that the annual payment may be reduced has caused a flutter in these clerical dovecotes, where so many have nicely feathered their nests.

A pious paper is very tearful "concerning the churchless crowd." The "churchless crowd" is getting along very well, thank you. How about the crowdless churches?

Where the carcase is there will the eagles gather. Missionary societies and General Booth are all hurrying to see which will be first in the field at Klondyke. Gold is no part of the object, only the benefit of assisting those who have the gold.

Archdeacon Sinclair thinks or says that the holding of cricket matches on Sunday by the Emeriti C.C. is part of a Roman Catholic plan of campaign to alter the public view of Sunday. But has not the old Puritan view of Sunday been pretty well altered by those who are at the opposite pole of thought to Catholicism? There are other cricket clubs beside Catholic ones that approve of Sunday play.

Near Mulberry, Arkansas, a farmer by the name of Autrey, becoming furious over a religious discussion, killed, with a bar of iron, his father, his mother, and his own son, seriously wounding his wife and three remaining children. Neighbors interfering, Autrey was overpowered and confined in chains. He had been attending an emotional

religious revival. Had he been a Liberal, his murderous conduct would have been charged up to his Infidelity.—*Independent Pulpit.*

Mr. H. L. Hastings, of the Anti-Infidel Library, asks: "Do you suppose that, if the Bible had been written by some learned doctor, revised by a committee of eminent divines, and published by some great religious society, we should ever have heard of Noah's drunkenness, of Abraham's deception, of Lot's disgrace, of Jacob's cheating, of Paul and Barnabas's quarreling, of Peter's lying, cursing, or dissembling? Not at all." According to this, the more obscenity in the Bible the stronger is the proof of its divine—not barbarous—origin.

The American Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions has sold the American cemetery at Jerusalem to replenish its funds. Serious complaint is made of the ghastly discovery that the exhumed bodies, supposed to be permanently resting in the sacred soil of the holy city, had been broken up and packed in small wooden boxes, so that no one can be identified. The chances are a thousand to one those bones will ultimately do service as martyrs to the Christian faith; perchance appear as those of St. Martha, St. Mary, or, possibly, that other Mary, the Magdalene.

The Roman Catholics over here in England are circulating a long extract from *Brann's Iconoclast*, denouncing ex-priest Slattery and praising the Roman Catholic Church. At the bottom of this leaflet it is stated that Brann is one of the leading Agnostics in America.

So far as Slattery is concerned, we have no sort of quarrel with Brann. For all we know, or all we care, Slattery may be the contemptible fellow that Brann describes him. Nor would it afflict us to know that all Brann says is true about the "escaped nun" who has been going about with Slattery in Great Britain. What we object to is Brann's fulsome praise of the Catholic Church.

W. C. Brann's *Iconoclast* is a monthly paper published at Waco, in Texas. It is written with a good deal of vigor, but it is, after all, a curious hotch-potch. We have just been looking through the March number. It opens with a racy article on soul-saver C. O. Brown, who had to leave San Francisco on account of his holy exploits among the feminine portion of the piety of the great Western's metropolis, and who has now got into the same sort of trouble at Chicago. But, although Brann delights in pitching into men of God, when they happen to be Protestants, he takes care to explain that he is no Atheist. In fact, he "looks down with painful surprise" at an "Ingersoll charging full tilt at mythical miracles." Brann worships God in his own fashion, and recognises "God's perpetual revelation," whatever that may be. Perhaps he has told his readers all about it; but we rather guess that God's perpetual revelation means any and every pious fancy that enters the head of W. C. Brann.

Judging from the March *Iconoclast*, there is a tremendous lot of the "bird o' freedom soarin'" in Brann's political composition. He is a mortal hater of John Bull, whom he calls an "arrogant brute" that has "been allowed to go too long without a licking." "The Star of Empire," says Brann, in his fine spread-eagle way, "is now blazing in the West." All right, then; let it blaze! But why should the great strong Brann flourish the tomahawk so savagely over the prostrate and despised form of this effete old British nation? Let us admit that "America is to-day the greatest nation on the map of the world." Let us bow before the "Giant of the Occident." But don't let him kick us every time he turns our way. It isn't pleasant, and it isn't dignified. Besides, it is apt to make us grin as we read Charles Dickens's *American Notes*, and to wonder why some of the species of featherless bipeds he described haven't become quite extinct in an age of higher culture and more settled civilization.

"We could buy up that miserable little island," says Brann, "pay for it and blow it at the moon, and the world would be none the worse." Yes, most noble Brann, you could buy it right enough, but you couldn't pay for it. Look at the figures again, and you will see what a big mistake you have made. You would have to give bills like the late Mr. Micawber; and, perhaps, when you had signed them, you would say like that worthy, "Thank God, that's settled." But how the devil would you meet the bills when they fell due? Maybe you would repudiate them, for that is a word that is not exactly unknown in American history.

As for blowing us to the moon—or at the moon, as you say—it might be done with Giant-of-the-Occident gas, but not with any other known explosive. And where should we be while you were doing it?

"England," says Brann, "has produced some really great

men [thank you!], but, like the hen that sat on the nest of door-knobs, it has taken her a terribly long time to bring off her brood." Now we confess that we don't like following Brann in this uncivil comparison; but, if we did do so, we might ask him to put two American names beside those of Darwin and Spencer—merely as a beginning. When he had matched those we could easily supply him with more. But it would be a very unprofitable use of time to go on capping names. We are glad to know that Brann stands almost alone among American Freethinkers as a Jingo. Nearly all the rest, from Ingersoll downwards, are superior to the malignant insularity which masquerades as patriotism. They are rather citizens of the world, wishing every country well, and desiring each to take its place in the common fold of humanity. That is the true spirit of Freethought, and it makes for peace, welfare, and progress; while the spirit that Brann gives voice to only fills the earth with bloodshed and misery.

Mr. Lloyd-George has placed on the paper the terms of the resolution which he is to move in the House of Commons on the 19th inst. with reference to public education. They are as follows: "That, in the opinion of this House, it is essential to a just and efficient system of national education that there should be within easy reach of every child in England and Wales a public elementary school under local management, and that there should also be provided increased facilities for the training of teachers in colleges free from sectarian influence."

The *New Age*, with very questionable taste, prints a leaderette on the suicide of Eleanor Marx Aveling, in which it preaches a homily on the "hopelessness of a purely materialistic conception of life and duty." All who are acquainted with the real facts of the case—and they are many—know that the poor lady's suicide was not brought about by any sort of "philosophy." We find it hard to believe that Mr. Fletcher has never heard of the impelling causes to this sad termination of a brave woman's career. Even if he is ignorant of them, he must surely be aware that thousands of Christians commit suicide every year. But the logic of piety was always peculiar. If a Christian commits suicide, it is "temporary insanity." If an Atheist commits suicide, it is "the fruits of materialism."

A West Ham suicide, George E. Hilleary, left a note on the table addressed to his parents, in which he said: "I often hear my two sisters and one brother in heaven calling me to go." He took strychnine and went, but no one knows whether he has arrived. Anyhow, he wasn't an Atheist.

An Ohio legislator has brought in a Bill to forbid the issue of a marriage licence to any person suffering from dipsomania, lunatic tendencies, or tuberculosis. Candidates for marriage he proposes to have examined by three physicians. "Should the Bill pass," the *New Age* says, "one result will no doubt be a decrease in the marriage rate." Very likely. But will there be any decrease in the population? It is so easy to get children without a State permission. Of course, it is very reprehensible to perpetuate dipsomania and tuberculosis, but when it comes to "lunatic tendencies" it is difficult to see how any Christian would be able to get a marriage licence. Suppose he were asked a few questions like these: Do you believe that a boy could be born without a father? Do you believe the first woman was made out of a cutlet? Do you believe it is possible to turn water into wine by magic? Do you believe that everybody who doesn't believe as you do will be damned? If he answered these questions in the affirmative, any rational doctor would say at once "Mad!" No wife for him in this world. Let him take his chance in the next.

Poor Johnstone, of Ballykilbeg! Every right-minded man will condole with him in his great misfortune. He is the champion of Orangeism, and on Easter Sunday his daughter Ada was received into the Roman Catholic Church. Sackcloth and ashes are the only wear.

The *Church Times* deplores the "leakage in Methodism," because "any form of Christ's religion is better than none." This must be very grateful and soothing to the Methodists.

The Rev. H. Haweis believes in having pretty girls as surpliced choristers in church. Paul prohibited them to speak in church, but this, says the popular Marylebone preacher, is no reason they should not sing.

The latest labor-saving contrivance of that paradise of mechanism, Chicago, is said to be an electric collection-box. No sidesmen are required, for as soon as the clergyman has touched a button in the pulpit the box runs along wires from pew to pew, and the congregation do the rest. The use of a button in the pulpit is obviously an appropriate revenge for the misuse of buttons in the pews.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 17, Friendly and Trade Societies' Hall, Northumberland-street, Huddersfield; 11, "Zola as a Freethinker"; 3, "God and the Devil"; 6.45, "Heaven and Hell: Where and What?"

April 24, Athenæum Hall, London.

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.

EX-RITUALIST.—Your verses will be pasted up in our composing-room.

GARIBALDI.—Hardly up to publication mark.

J. G. DOBSON.—Always pleased to hear from you. We wish Freethought had a host of such zealous friends. See paragraph.

A. B. MOSS.—Very pleased to note that your occupation with Vestry business does not prevent your working for Freethought. An earnest advocate like yourself has always our best wishes.

T. H. SEYMOUR points out that the "Thames Auxiliary Meeting" referred to in the *Freethinker* of April 10 should have been the "Thame Auxiliary." Thame is a small market town on the borders of Oxfordshire. This correspondent is thanked for drawing our attention to what was of course a printer's blunder.

H. JAMES.—Will make use of it in our next. Thanks.

G. F. DUPLAY.—Really don't know what you are driving at. Perhaps it's our stupidity.

J. H. TUDBALL wants to know how the apostles, who had fallen asleep, heard what Christ said when he prayed in Gethsemane; and, if they didn't hear what he said, who did? He also wants to know why John says nothing about this episode. We are sorry we cannot tell him. He must apply to a know-all parson. Still, we have our private opinion—namely, that the gospels are all fiction, which was never intended to be scrutinized in a spirit of profane logic. "Such questions," as the nigger preacher said, "would upset any system of theology."

W. HARDWICKE.—We will deal with it in our next issue. Thanks for forwarding it to us.

W. GOODBURN.—Advertisements must be prepaid. It is also necessary that we should know what we are advertising.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Sheffield and Rotherham Independent—Friar Tankar—Isle of Man Times—Liverpool Porcupine—Liverpool Mercury—New York Public Opinion—Truthseeker—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Bolton Evening News—Awakener of India—Zoophilist—Western Morning News—People's Newspaper—Star—Vegetarian Messenger—De Dageraad.

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.

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent 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.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Dream of the Resurrection," Mr. Bater occupying the chair. The lecture, which was warmly applauded, was followed by several questions and some discussion. To-day (April 17) Mr. Foote delivers three lectures at Huddersfield, and will be happy to see friends from neighboring places. The local Branch expects good audiences on this occasion.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures this evening, Sunday, April 17, at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject Moody's statement, "Christ not Wanted." This, no doubt, will call forth an interesting debate.

As intimated in last week's *Freethinker*, the National Secular Society's Conference will be held at Manchester on Whit-Sunday. Some really important matters will be brought forward for discussion, and it is to be hoped that there will be a large attendance of Branch delegates and individual members from all parts of the country. Branches should lose no time in taking steps to be represented. Notices of motion for the Agenda should be forwarded to the Secretary, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C., by the end of April.

Mr. G. J. Warren, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, has for some time been a vestryman at Mile End, and is now also a member of the Board of Guardians, having been elected at the top of the poll in spite of certain adverse influences of religious bigotry. Unfortunately the pressure of these local public duties will prevent Mr. Warren from attending the meetings of the N. S. S. Executive as he has done for so many years. However, his old colleagues hope to see him occasionally, though they cannot see him often. Mr. Warren has been a very earnest, loyal, and energetic worker in the Freethought movement. No man has served the cause with greater zeal and sincerity, always in conjunction with common sense and good temper.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie's poems in the columns of the *Freethinker* and other journals having excited admiration and interest in many quarters, he has, at the suggestion of some friends, made a selection of the choicest among them, with a view to their preservation in book form. Mr. Mackenzie never writes without having something distinct to say and some point to make. His muse is wise and witty, felicitous in argument and illustration, and musical in expression. He has justly earned the title of Poet Laureate of the Freethought movement, and we hope that every friend of the cause, who has enjoyed Mr. Mackenzie's contributions, will send a postcard to Mr. Forder, expressing willingness to subscribe for the volume, which, if a sufficient number of subscribers are forthcoming, will be issued at half-a-crown.

Mr. Symes informs us that the Freethought Hall in which he is now lecturing "is the identical Hall we built in 1889, that was stolen from us in 1891, and that was purchased for and hired to us in December, 1897. By a combination of rascalities, we were robbed of the building for seven years, less three or four months. But now there is nothing but the general poverty of Melbourne and Victoria to prevent our flourishing as well as ever. What with huge crimes, recklessness, and repeated disasters, this colony is in a bad way, and the time of renewed prosperity is indefinitely postponed. Still, we are not without hope."

The twentieth annual Conference of the National Union of Teachers opened at Cheltenham on Monday. The new president, Mr. R. Waddington, of Bolton, in his inaugural address, plainly declared that "the theologian blocked the way." Precisely so. And he will always block the way until he is cleared out of it altogether. Perhaps the teachers will see this before long. When they do we shall be within measurable distance of secular education.

"Christopher Crayon," in the *Christian World*, advocates cremation as "a necessity." Another step in a wholesome direction. Freethinkers have long been in favor of cremation, and the Christians are following them at a pious distance.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch is carrying on Sunday evening free lectures in the Lecture Room, corner of Raber-street and Parker-street, Byker. The lectures commence at 7 o'clock, and discussion is invited.

At Toynbee Hall Elizabethan Society Mr. Frank Payne read a paper on "Shakespeare and Montaigne," clearly bringing out the influence of the French essayist on the English playwright. Mr. F. Rogers and Mr. J. M. Wheeler joined in the discussion.

Mr. A. B. Moss began his open-air work for this season on Sunday last at Limehouse, where he addressed a large and interested meeting. In the evening he lectured to a good audience in the Camberwell Secular Hall.

Our latest and very promising platform recruit, Mr. H. P. Ward, delivered three highly successful lectures on Sunday at Stockton-on-Tees. He addressed a large open-air meeting in the morning at the Market Cross, and spoke to good audiences afternoon and evening in the Borough Hall. There was plenty of discussion, in which a Salvation Army captain participated. The local friends are much pleased with Mr. Ward's lectures and conduct in debate.

Now that the Liverpool Branch has removed from the Oddfellows' Hall to more commodious quarters in the Alexandra Hall, the Christians are chortling as though they had achieved a remarkable triumph. Mr. Bramley Moore, they say, has engaged in the "daring enterprise" of conducting mission services in the Oddfellows' Hall. "Daring" is distinctly good. No doubt it is thought that the Secularists left a large number of dynamite bombs secreted about the premises. A writer in the *Liverpool Review*, calling himself "A Wandering Scribe"—a very apt designation—rejoices over the "failure" of the Secularists and the cessation of their "blasphemy." Well, the Secularists have not failed, and their blasphemy (if Christians choose to call it so) is not discontinued. Altogether, the Liverpool Branch can well afford to laugh at these pious hysterics.

The *Sydney Bulletin*, from which we make some extracts in another column, is one of the notable publications of the world's press. Although a sixpenny journal, it is Republican, Freethought, and Socialistic. It ever says what it thinks in plain English. It has incubated and encouraged fresh poets, like F. Adams, Davey, Luftig, and others; story-tellers and novelists like H. Lawson and Louis Becke, and artists like Phil May, "Hop," and G. Lambert. It has had on its journalists of genius like Mr. Archibald, Mr. Brunton Stephens, and Mr. A. G. Stephens. The latter gentleman, we believe, conducts "The Red Page," on which has appeared some of the best literary criticism of our time. The *Bulletin* is one of our liveliest exchanges, and must be a potent influence in building up the new Australia.

EARLY RELIGION.

THE recent discourse of Dr. T. Witton Davies, Principal of the Midland Baptist College, at the monthly meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society, on the subject of "Magic, Divination, and Demonology among the Semites," was notable as giving a juster view of the development of religion than that commonly held by theologians. Magic he defined as the attempt on man's part to have intercourse with spiritual and supernatural beings, and to influence them for his benefit. All magic, he said, is a kind of religion. In the mythology of the Vedas it is hard, if not impossible, to discriminate between sacrifices and magical acts; in each case something is done to propitiate higher beings. The same may be said of Jewish sacrifices. Putting sin as a scapegoat was essentially magical. Jahveh and Jesus are both magicians. One makes a woman out of a man's rib, and the other turns water into wine. Moses is initiated into the magician's art by Jahveh, who turns his rod into a serpent, and back again into a rod; suddenly makes his hand leprous, and as suddenly restores it. The holy oil, the water of jealousy, the brazen serpent, and the ark of Jahveh himself are all magical. It is in vain that Dr. Jevons seeks to show that magic is a devolution from the religious stage.* His only argument is that religion tends to suppress magic. He might as well contend that civilized man has not evolved from savage man, because he tends to extirpate savages. By most modern anthropologists (E. B. Tylor, A. Lang, F. Ratzel), and also by the great philosopher, Hegel, it is maintained that magic is a stepping-stone to religion, if not an earlier step in its progress. More justly magic has to do more or less with all stages of religion, and there are none that are wholly free from it. Dr. Davies remarked that magic and medicine have a close connection, and it has been reiterated over and over that magic is incipient medical science. Incantations, plants, drugs, amulets, are magical means, because they have been found to have cer-

tain physical effects. The origin, however, is undoubtedly religious, or magical. Since diseases of all sorts are believed by primitive man to be owing to the action of demons; whatever tends to remove the diseases is considered to have the effect of exorcising or driving away the demons. In a similar way, the distinction of clean and unclean meats in the Old Testament was first of all a religious one, having a totemistic origin; yet the character of the foods in relation to nutrition and health has undoubtedly influenced the division. Some animals were clean, others unclean spirits. Magic and divination were at the outset not distinguished; indeed, at first divination was not merely a foretelling of the future, but a creating and controlling of that future, just as astrology, in the earliest period, regarded the heavenly bodies as determining human destiny, and not merely indicating it. Magic and demonology have likewise a very close connection; indeed, so close that by some writers they have been almost identified; yet there is a distinction. In magic the agent makes his appeal to benevolent spirits, or to a benevolent deity, as against the destructive working of demons. The experience of early man soon made him believe in the dualism of spiritual beings. The good he received was traced to benevolent beings, the bad to malevolent ones. But these might at different times be one and the same.

The office of magician is to archaic man what that of prophet is to a more advanced people. Milton says, "New Presbyter is but old priest writ large"; and it may be added, old priest is but modified sorcerer. The man who is believed to be able to get the good spirits to guard from the evil ones attains consideration, dignity, and substantial recompense in return for his supposed service. It should be remembered, too, that, as Dr. Davies pointed out, the gods of one people are often called evil spirits by another; indeed, the Hebrew word translated "evil spirits" in the Bible sometimes means heathen deities. Nothing is more striking in the Assyrian texts than the number of prayers offered to good spirits to protect the supplicants against evil spirits.

The magic of the Babylonians and Assyrians was obtained from the Accadians, who appear to have had two classes. The wizards and witches were supposed to be in contact with demons direct, while the magicians dealt immediately with the good deities only. The magic of the wizards was naturally described by the magicians as illegitimate.

Among the ancient Greeks, Romans, Arabs, etc., modes of divining existed which were apparently unknown to the Hebrews of the Old Testament—*e.g.*, by observation of the flights and cries of birds, inspection of the entrails of animals, etc. Yet there are many signs or omens mentioned in the Old Testament which are either similar to or identical with those made use of by other nations. Casting lots is often referred to in the Bible, and Proverbs xvi. 31 declares that Jahveh supervises this species of gambling. The Urim and Thummin of Aaron's breastplate, probably two stones with "Yes" and "No" inscribed, were magical articles used in divining, and the teraphim were also oracular. Most important of all the modes of divination which link the Hebrews with other nations is that by dreams, and dreams form an important item in the Bible, from the time of Joseph, the Egyptian minister, to that of Joseph, the Nazarene carpenter.

There can be no doubt that it was when the Hebrews came in contact with the Babylonians during their residence in Babylon that they adopted the belief in astrology. The wise men who, in Matt. ii, were guided in their search for the child Christ are regarded by the writer with approval. It was indeed a chief item of early Christian evidence that Christ had been prophesied of and found out by magi who had seen his star.

Ritual is the oldest part of religion and the most enduring. Customs remain, while their explanation changes. All the rites of Christianity are acted magic. Baptism is a magical sacrament warding off devils in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Lord's Supper is a magic communion with the god in which the bread and wine is magically transformed into flesh and blood to magically operate on the god-eater. The consecration of churches and graveyards, the imposition of hands by the bishop, in which he passes on the Holy Ghost and Apostolic succession to a fresh priest, are all in essence magical.

* See *Freethinker*, May 16, 1897; and "Religion and Magic," in *Bible Studies*.

THE COMPOSITOR'S DOOM.

THERE was a man who went to hell
Designedly, 'tis said;
While there, he played his cards so well
That Satan made him Head
O'er every stoker-imp and elf,
But nothing pleased this man;
He only muttered to himself,
"I have my little plan."

At times his eyes would blaze like fire,
And horridly he'd scowl;
Some recollection dread and dire
Oft made him squirm and howl.
A patent furnace he prepared,
So hot that Satan ran
And God perspired—the angels heard
"O damn this little plan!"

One day a lost one entered hell—
A sinful comp. was he:
The Stoker-Chieftain gave a yell
Of wild, demoniac glee.
"My Evil Genius has come!
Haste, imps, my furnace fan:
Pile coal and coke, and make things hum!
Faith! mine's a holy plan!"

"Perpend, thou type-assassin vile:—
My verse you mangled sore;
My articles made people smile,
While at my jokes they swore.
You haunted me like any ghost—
I died beneath your ban;
'Tis my turn now—get in, and roast;
D'ye like my little plan?"

They popped him in; he's burning yet—
The hottest place is his'n;
Though God and Satan fume and sweat,
And fain would cool his prison.
Take warning, comps, and mend your ways;
Reform while yet you can;
O, shun the everlasting Blaze,
Inspire no vengeful plan.

EX-RITUALIST.

SOLOMON'S WIVES.

"But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites. Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart."—1 KINGS XI. 1-3.

MONCURE D. CONWAY contributes an article to the April number of *The Open Court* in which he finds something to say for the polygamy of sultan Solomon. Of course, this is in application only to the circumstances of the time. Mr. Conway remarks that "our own monogamic ideas are quite inapplicable to a period when personal affection had nothing to do with marriage, when women had no means of independent subsistence, and the size of a man's harem was the measure of his benevolence. Probably there was then no place more enviable for a woman than Solomon's seraglio." This, I take leave to say, does not appear to have been the view of the Shulamite whose sentiments are recorded in the Song of Solomon, viii. 12, and it is at least possible there were other women, as well as husbands of wives and fathers of daughters, who were not anxious that Solomon should increase "the measure of his benevolence." Indeed, it will be remembered that, when the Israelites desired a king, Samuel warned them that he would take their daughters to be his servants; and, although they were content to take the penalty, it is not likely that he was appealing to a non-existing sentiment.

Evidently, in the eyes of the Bible writer, Solomon's sin was not in the size of the seraglio, but in its foreign and idolatrous wives. (Here our translators again get in an innuendo against Solomon by turning "foreign" into "strange women.") Before a religious notion can get itself fixed as law it is apt to be enforced by an extra amount of odium. Solomon's mother had married a Hittite, and presumably he would have imbibed liberal ideas on such subjects. The round number of a thousand

ladies in his harem is unhistorical, but that the chief princesses were of Gentile origin and religion is clear.

Now, Mr. Conway observes: "As our cosmopolitan prince had to send abroad for workmen of skill, he may also have had to seek abroad for ladies accomplished enough to be his princesses. That, however, does not explain the number and variety of the countries from which the wives seem to have come. The theory of many scholars, that this Prince of Peace substituted alliances by marriage for military conquests, is confirmed in at least one instance. The mother of his only son, Rehoboam, was Naamah, the Ammonitess (1 Kings xiv. 31), and the Septuagint preserves an addition to this verse that she was the 'daughter of Ana the son of Nahash'—a king (Hanum) with whom David had waged furious war. The reference in the epithalamium (Ps. xlv.) to 'Tyrus's daughter,' in connection with 1 Kings v. 12, 'there was peace between Hiram and Solomon,' suggests that there also marriage was the peacemaker."

The phrase in 1 Kings iii. 1, "Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh and took Pharaoh's daughter," suggests, though less clearly, that some feud may have been settled with that case also, though, indeed, the alliance may have only been pretended by later writers in order to fill out the measure of Solomon's glory. It is evident that no king could have had much power between the mighty empires of Assyria and Egypt; and, probably, the shanty ninety feet by thirty-five known as Solomon's Temple was quite commensurate with the real glory of his kingdom, which derived whatever power it had from alliances with heathen nations. Mr. Conway observes in conclusion: "There is an unconscious humor in the solemn reading by English clergymen of Jahvist rebukes of Solomon for his tolerance towards idolatry, at a time when the Queen of England and Empress of India is protecting temples and idols throughout her realm, and has just rebuilt the ancient temple of Buddha at Gaya; while the sacred laws of Brahman, Buddhist, Parsee, Moslem, are used in English courts of justice. If any modern Josiah should insult a shrine of Vishnu, or of any Hindoo deity, he would have to study his exemplar inside a British prison."

FROM THE "SYDNEY BULLETIN."

WHEN Antoinette Sterling was in Sydney, she gave such an untraditional rendering of an oratorio, aria that city-organist Wiegand became quite indignant. "You do not sing ze musique," he expostulated, whereupon Antoinette sweetly replied: "I sing it as the Lord taught me." "Umph!" commented Weigand, with strong nasal emphasis, "I did not know ze Lord was such a bad musician."

Godless education again! At a recent meeting of the Sydney Builders' and Contractors' Association the deplorable discovery was made that not one member could name the date of the approaching Easter Sunday. The mystery that an ungodly pressman was better posted is easily explained. The scribe smells holiday-time afar off—because for him, unhappy wretch, it means double work!

Another S. A. local preacher a-missing. He is an aggressive Wesleyan and teetotaler this time, but the deficit is just as large as in previous cases, and the only asset left behind is the usual halo. This brother was apparently a quiet, inoffensive man, and there is no evidence at present of a string of racehorses, or a suburban harem, to account for the deficiency; but it is there just the same.

Dr. Cockburn at the Federal Convention: "It could not be held that the Almighty belonged to any particular religion." The cocksure Cockburn! What does he know about the private religious views of his Maker, anyhow? The fact is that, judging by the statements of theologians themselves—from the red-hatted cardinal and the bishop in lawn sleeves down to the humblest rusty-coated itinerant expounder of the "Gawspel"—there are as many almighties as there are creeds, or even denominations. And each almighty appears to look upon all the others as impostors.

Anent St. Patrick's celebration the *Bulletin* says: "The Orange-and-Green processions case in Melbourne brought to light a shriekingly humorous Wesleyan preacher. The reverend was on the Orange side of the case, and started his evidence glibly enough:—

'George Tregear, Wesleyan minister, gave evidence with regard to the service performed in the Presbyterian Church, Brunswick, on 18th July. He had seen the emblems produced in court the previous day, and they were emblematical of the great civil victories won by the King—the lawful King.'

Then barrister Smyth stopped his streak of eloquence by asking the name of the king, and there was a pause which nearly blew the roof off the premises. The witness had either forgotten or had never known the name of the blessed monarch he was gushing over, and had to be informed that his hero was William III. When he was informed, he remembered suddenly; but probably, if he had been told that his hero was named Samuel XII., he would have remembered just the same. Then an Irish person named Nolan loomed up darkly through the fog of controversy on the other side of the case. He objected to the waving of the Orange banner as a premeditated insult intended to rub in the recollection of the 'batin' his countrymen 'ressaved.' Being asked for dates or names or other particulars about the said 'batin,' he couldn't supply any. So, if these two witnesses were fair specimens of their respective parties, neither side really knew what it was processing and waving banners and filling the air with cheers and road-metal about. They howled because their fathers howled before them, and their fathers howled because their grandfathers howled, and what their grandfathers were howling about had been quite forgotten."

Bishop Smith, since he was turned into an archbishop, has engaged a domestic chaplain, who comes out with him. Chaplain's duties are to carry the big man's crook on solemn occasions, and to look after the bishop's house when he is taking tea at Govt. House or with pious old maids. If the chaplain gives satisfaction, he is presented with an incumbency after some time. The Sydney clergy are asking how many more domestic chaplains the bishop will cart out here. Already one of these gentlemen has a fat living somewhere down Kiama way, to the detriment of sons of the soil, who have prayed on their knees ever so long for something better to do.

BOOK CHAT.

A CURIOUS sixpenny pamphlet reaches us from the Bonners, 1 Took's-court, E.C. It is entitled *An Unknown People*, and is written by Edward Carpenter. Those who have a taste for the morbid or the abnormal will find it interesting. Mr. Carpenter tries to enlist sympathy for a small minority of persons who are styled Urnings. The name, of course, is not very illuminating. The persons themselves are (so to speak) sexual cross-breeds or moral hermaphrodites; men with a mixture of the feminine, or women with a dash of the masculine. Mr. Carpenter writes about their peculiarities with commendable taste and reticence, but it may be doubted whether any good can be done for them on the lines he contemplates.

Das Kind und die Geschlechtliche Entwicklung, "The Child and Sexual Evolution," by Robert Dencker (Leipsic: Max Spohr), is an important pamphlet, by one who believes that knowledge and guidance suited to each age should be imparted to the young with respect to their sexual organization. Herr Dencker writes with earnestness and lofty views. Some ostrich-headed people who fancy that shutting the eyes may make facts non-existent may object to the treatment of the subject at all; but otherwise there can be no objection to the method of treatment by Herr Dencker.

Dr. Parker, contributing a paper on "The New Citizenship" to the volume of Nonconformist theology entitled *The Ancient Faith in Modern Light*, coolly proposed the endowment of all religious bodies. Instead of a sectarian State, picking out theology and stamping it with the Queen's head, he would have "a State doing all in its power to extend and uphold the entire religious influence of the country." His scheme for producing religious equality is to turn the bishops out of the Lords, and to put three of them in the Commons with "the chairman of all the Christian communions in the country." Joseph Parker legislating for the Empire by virtue of his being minister of the City Temple would be a sight for gods and men.

Evolutional Ethics and Animal Psychology, by E. P. Evans, is a survey of animal consciousness and a plea for the recognition of duty to animals—a duty which Mr. Evans notices has been overlooked by Christian theology.

Messrs. Duckworth & Co. are to be the publishers of Mr. Leslie Stephen's new work, which is entitled *Studies in Biography*.

Sir George Lewis says that there are West-end usurers who make a point of lending to married women at over 60 per cent. interest, while some lend to boys without the knowledge of their parents and get 800 per cent. In view of such facts, *Shylock at the Bar*, by T. Farrow, a penny pamphlet on the Parliamentary inquiry into money-lending,

should have a large circulation. Mr. Farrow suggests that the State, municipality, or voluntary association should take up a fresh departure in the direction of meeting the financial needs of the community.

Hippolyte Rodrigues has written a work on *Les Origines des Troisièmes Chrétiens*, by which he means those who claimed the name of Christian after Constantine had, from political motives, established that faith which, M. Rodrigues contends, became thenceforth Paganized. The worship of Mary organized in imitation of that of Isis, the cult of images, confession, clerical celibacy, the mass, and much of Christian ritual, were, he contends, innovations in the churches of Paganism. No doubt there is considerable truth in this thesis.

No. 7 of "The Pennyworth Series," published by Morison Brothers, Glasgow, is *American Humor*, selected by David Macrae. Of course, Mr. Macrae avoids the peculiar irreverence of our Transatlantic cousins, although he alludes to it. One piece having this flavor is Mark Twain's description of his ancestor: "Charles Henry Twain lived during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and was a zealous and distinguished missionary. He converted sixteen thousand South Sea islanders, and taught them that a dog-tooth necklace and a pair of spectacles was not enough clothing to come to Divine service in. His poor flock loved him very, very dearly, and when his funeral was over they got up in a body (and came out of the restaurant), with tears in their eyes, and saying to one another that he was a good tender missionary, and they wished there had been more of him." Father Taylor's saying of Emerson, "If Emerson goes to hell, he will change the climate," is also mentioned.

Obituary.

DIED at Chicago, on March 18, Mrs. Matilda Joslyn Gage, a prominent anti-slavery worker of fifty years ago, and a friend and associate of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in their women's rights and Freethought views. Mrs. Gage, with them, edited *The History of Woman's Suffrage*, and has written on *Woman, Church, and State*.

By the death of Dr. Samuel Davidson, at the advanced age of ninety-one, England loses a critic who did very much to overthrow the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. He was forced to resign his chair in the Lancashire Independent College for his independent stand in Biblical criticism, but he lived to see the tide of advanced thought reach, and even go beyond, his conclusions. His *Introduction to the Old Testament*, and *New Introduction to the New Testament*, contain much good criticism.

It is only recently that we heard of the death, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, of Charles James Haslam, whose *Letters to the Clergy of all Denominations* in 1838 created attention even in the House of Lords, the publishers being prosecuted for blasphemy. In 1841 Mr. Haslam followed this with *Letters to the Bishop of Exeter*, containing materials for deciding the question whether or not the Bible is the word of God. Mr. Haslam's letters were plain and pointed, and cannot be said even now to be quite out of date. He remained a Freethinker all his days, which extended to eighty-six years. His latest publication was a pamphlet on *The Suppression of War*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PHRENOLOGY AND THEISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent, Mr. Mayo, who is acquainted with all the text-books of Phrenology, permit me to first say I make no apology for quoting what he pleases to call a 40 cents booklet. It is included in the Students' Set, and is an acknowledged work by standard authors. To use the words of the advertisement, it is by authors "who know what they are writing about," and is "the most comprehensive and popular work ever published at the price." I could have quoted other works included in the set, but the definitions are much the same; therefore, being the most popular, I quoted it as far as was necessary to serve my purpose. If I quoted all the definitions available, I should require the whole paper; but definitions do not prove that phrenology proves Theism, any more than to say the advocates have denied its materialistic tendencies have proved that too.

The question is, To what extent are they secular, and to what extent Theistic?—as a person can possess one large and one small. For my own, Professor W. Cross gives me (and truly) Spirituality small, and Veneration large. I had fifteen years' forcible cultivation, and during that time, as I

do now, I cared nothing for religion (Theism). I have tried to cultivate, but without avail. If my opponent procures Combe's *Constitution* (pp. 54, 55), he will see that his definitions are purely secular, with the exception, "Gives origin to religious adoration." There is not a word about belief in God. So much for Combs. Drayton (*Brain and Mind*, p. 178), under Spirituality, places the secular functions of this organ first, "to inspire trust in the strange and the marvelous. It is the basis of the longing after novelty, and this stimulates intellectual progress." Not a word about Theism. Of Veneration he says, the organ "is blind or instinctive in its activity.....Veneration, however, is not confined to religion. It has a wide yet related sphere of activity in the affairs of human life, including respect for authority, deference for others, and reverence for whatever is great or good." This is from a man who is advertised as knowing what he is writing about. Fowler, who admits of three divisions in each faculty, defines two of three divisions under secular heads. Surely faculties that are two-thirds secular are not "essentially religious." If my opponent will get almost any chart, he will see that the religious functions (so-called) are not given until about the fifth degree—and we may safely say that the organ is healthy in the fourth. Thus we see that when the degree verges on (if not quite on) excess we get religious belief. Now, if the size of the faculty determines its power, and proves its endowment by "the Creator," what shall we say when it is deficient? Who endows them, then? Who gives excesses? Why make such a difference in degree if the faculties are essentially religious? If a man have the organs small, and is "shallow," what can we say of the Theist's text-booklet which says, faculties or no faculty, "Every man is brutish"?

Let me give Mr. Mayo a fact which can be verified. A well-known Secular lecturer, and a writer for this journal, has a family of children, all of whom are withdrawn from religious instruction of any kind. They all possess these "intuitive religious organs" large; and yet, although they are all quite old enough to give evidence of their character in the "reverence for deity" element, they have never shown the least sign of such in their nature. This, at least, is evidence against Sizer's contentions. If the faculties are primarily Theistic, why do we find so many Secularists with them large? Why keep such an army of black dragoons to keep them active? Can a man act against his organization? If so, phrenology falls. A celebrated phrenologist told Darwin he had them large; surely Darwin—if they are essentially religious—could not have acted as he did! Let Mr. Mayo produce men who are intuitively Theists, with such evidence as can be investigated. If he cannot prove the religious element to be innate, my case is made out.

If my opponent has faith in the cultivating principle, and knows of cases to prove it, I am open to receive them. Why did not Combe cultivate Calculation, or Gall Order? They lived long enough! I have not met, I admit, any faculty in degree one; but, if it is not possible for any organ to exist so low as degree one, why have it for marking on the charts? If, as Fossate asserted of the organ of Order in Gall, he was "absolutely destitute of it," it could not have existed at all. I have no wish for faculties to be inactive; I wish them to be in use, and not in abuse; but let me keep in subservience any faculty that is "blind," or likely to "bias the judgment" (O. Dell), or lead to fanaticism. We both agree about healthy conditions, and, when they are, they are secular organs of the first order.

I did not say the brain *did* think. I know that some phrenologists say the science teaches that the brain is the "instrument of the mind," and that the mind is distinct from the brain; yet I buy books for four and six shillings respectively from those who teach it, which say: "Phrenology teaches that every sentiment, every element of taste and aversion, of hope and fear, of love and hatred, as well as the intellectual faculties and memory, have their special seats in some parts of the brain" (*Heads and Faces*, p. 7). "Concerning the substance or essence of mind, whether it is material, or immaterial, or how the spirit and the body are united, our philosophy is silent" (*Brain and Mind*, p. 19). Silence is golden! I again remind my opponent this was written by men who have had fifty years' experience, and is advertised as by men "who know." How a quantity which is not yet safe to rank material or immaterial is in the brain, and all the time distinct, I will not judge. Perhaps we shall be told. If the mind be the player, and the brain the instrument, as Mr. Mayo's analogy invites us to believe, let him produce the player, as we can the objects *player and instrument* (say) of music, and settle the question for ever.

Phrenology is neither *pseudo* nor *exact*; it is like wit, a good thing when well applied. It is the advocates, and not the science, which are at fault. Ah, sir, we require more logic and less jargon to prove an innate faculty of a Theistic nature.

A. E. DAVIS.

CATHOLIC CONVERTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As I find Cardinal Vaughan has ordered a census to be taken of the members of his church, and as there are

many persons who may have been baptized, when children, by Roman Catholic priests, but who are now actually either Protestants or Freethinkers, yet may find themselves enumerated as Catholic by enthusiastic relations or zealous priests, it appears to me to be a duty everyone who has separated himself from Romanism owes the community, in the face of the extraordinary efforts now being made to give the country the appearance of accepting a Catholic reaction, to publicly declare his repudiation of, and to formally separate himself from, the Roman Church.

Acting on this idea, as a person who has been baptized as a child, and received as an adult in the Roman Church, and therefore likely to figure as "two" in the members of a body I regard with every feeling of execration, I have written to the rector of the church where I was received, asking him to erase my name, or cause it to be erased from any register or list he has, or knows of, of members of the Roman Church.

I think it would be very advisable of the editor of the *Freethinker* to open a column for the renouncement of Romanism, and of all forms of religion; for, while the Roman Church unscrupulously uses every name it can get as an advertisement, the many thousands of every grade of society which leave her enraged and in disgust give no strength either to Freethought or the Protestant sects they may join. These should send an intimation to the bishop or parish priest they had been under as Roman Catholics that they formally separated themselves from the Roman Catholic Church.

The initials of such former Catholics would be sufficient for publication, but a list of the names could be kept by the secretary of the N. S. S., for verification should they be challenged.

G. P.

I H S.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am delighted at the publicity you are giving to the above subject in your always interesting paper. I have now been several weeks looking up the evidence for the origin of the above monogram, and I have discovered, first, the Rev. Robert Taylor, B.A., says in his *Astronomico-Theological Discourses*, p. 28: "And this same IES is composed of the Ammonian radicals, I, the one; and ES, the fire—that is, the one great fire—that is, the sun, under which identical name he was the Supreme Deity of the ancient fire-worshippers of Persia, from whom his rites were adopted by those who are absurdly called the primitive Christians."

But take the abbreviation of Iacchus, which was one of the names of Bacchus, and which will most assuredly give IHS as the contraction of the above; not only that, but it will also give the same sound as Yes, if the two monosyllables, I-ES, are contracted into one syllable.

Again, take the initial letters of the Egyptian Trinity, and ask Mr. Higgins if all this is coincidence—Isis, Horus, and Osiris, which last Deity was often called Serapis; and here again you have the controversial monogram.

But, above all, I would ask your readers who are interested in the above subject to look at the definition of IHS in *Lloyd's Encyclopedic Dictionary*, more especially at the Rev. W. W. Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*, than whom, I am told, there is not a greater living authority, and who finishes with:—

"In M.E. commonly written in a contracted form (IHS), which by editors is often printed Jhesus. This is really an error, the 'h' standing for the Gk. H (long e), so that Ihs=Iesus. So also Ihu=Iesu. In Gk. capitals it is Ihc, where H=long e, and C=S, being a form of the Gk. sigma; the mark above signifying that the form is contracted. In later times IHC became IHS. Lastly (the H being misunderstood), the ingenious fiction arose that IHS meant Jesus Hominum Salvator=Jesus Savior of Men. The mark, being then unmeaning, was turned into a cross, as on modern altar-cloths."

W. F. HERBERT.

PROFANE JOKES.

It was in a Sussex pastoral district that, when the sky-pilot inquired, "Why did the good shepherd leave the ninety-nine sheep to look after the one that was lost?" he received the answer: "Cos he wor a tup."

A Sunday-school teacher in Albion, N.Y., asked her class the question, "What did Simon say?" "Thumbs up!" replied the children in chorus.

Jumpuppe—"Confound these theosophists." Jasper—"Why?" Jumpuppe—"They convinced my wife that she had seven bodies, and she went off and bought a dress for each one of them."

"You should be comforted, my dear brother," said the pastor to the dying man, "by the thought that flesh and blood cannot enter the other world." "Then I am prepared to go," gasped the doomed man, "for I am reduced, as you see, to skin and bone."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Christ not Wanted."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8, Social evening. April 21, at 8.30, Touzeau Parris.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, E. Pack, "Forgotten Christian Sects."
EDMONTON (N.E. London Settlement): April 15, at 7, R. Forder, "Did Jesus Ever Live?"; 17, at 7, Mr. White.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Ethics of the Intellectual Life." Peckham Rye (near band-stand): 3, J. Clarke, M.A.
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Stanton Coit, "Savonarola."
WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7, W. Banyard, "Does Death Terminate our Existence?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones.
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Instinct and Reason." Peckham Rye: 3.15, E. Pack, "Relics of Savagery."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.
WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, A lecture.
WOOD GREEN: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Medicine."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): H. Snell—11, "The Christian Military-cum-Missionary Frauds in China"; 7, "Zola and Religion."
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street): H. P. Ward—11.30, "Why I Dare not be a Christian"; 2.30, "What will you Give us in Place of Christianity?—A Secularist's Answer"; 6.30, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secularist Platform."
HUDDERSFIELD (Friendly and Trade Societies' Club, Northumberland-street): G. W. Foote—11, "Zola as a Freethinker"; 3, "God and the Devil"; 6.45, "Heaven and Hell: Where and What?"
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Annual meeting.
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen—11, "What do we Know of Christ?"; 3 (Alexandra Park, near flag-pole), "The Aims and Objects of Secularism"; 6.30, Discussion between C. Cohen and W. Simpson, "Is Theism More Reasonable than Atheism?"
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (corner of Raby and Parker-streets): 7, R. Chapman, "The Logic of Atheism."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Melton, "Dennis Hird (late clergyman), Author and Heretic."
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

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

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—April 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, Hnll.—April 17, Glasgow.

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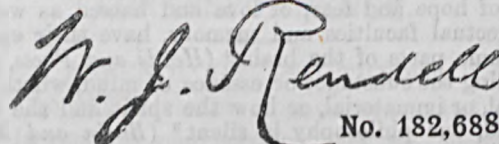
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