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PRICE TWOPENCE.

DEATH THE DEMOCRAT.

"The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master."—*Job*.

"O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*"—*Sir Walter Raleigh*.

"The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade."

—*Shirley*.

"Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."
—*Shakespeare, "Hamlet."*

EVERYONE has heard of the great Saladin, the Mohammedan ruler, whose humanity was such a striking contrast to the brutality of the Christian Crusaders. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, they turned it into a shambles; when Saladin recaptured it he did not shed a drop of gratuitous blood; on the contrary, he spent a large sum of his own money in redeeming captives, whose misery filled his heart with compassion. At his death this splendid "infidel" ordered charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan. This was a sublime act in that age and in those circumstances. But I have always more admired—if that be possible—the poetical inspiration of another death-bed act of his. "Take this cloak," he said to his servant, "show it to the faithful, and tell them that the ruler of the East could take but one garment with him into the grave."

There is something in the lofty and stern monotheism of Islam more favorable to the sentiments of democracy than anything to be found in the Christian religion; and doubtless this was in part the inspiration of Saladin's death-bed message to the world; but another, and probably a larger, part of it was due to his own superiority of nature. He had something of the poet in him. He saw through the shows and masks of things. He perceived their naked reality. He knew what life is, and what death is. We are all equal at birth, all senseless and helpless; and afterwards, beneath all the distinctions of society, we are less unequal than we appear; and when death comes the equality is once more pronounced. A husband standing beside his dead wife is just the same sad picture in a palace or a cottage. A mother weeping over her dead child reckes not whether the furniture of the room be mean or sumptuous. The accidents of life sink into nothingness when the essentials assert themselves. And then comes the final and eternal equality of the grave. All fare alike at that last supper—"not where he eats, but where he is eaten." Nay, a tall pauper inherits more earth at the finish than a shorter nobleman; and the little worm knows no distinction between king and peasant.

Death makes all odds even. Hats off, then, to Death the democrat! Death the leveller! compared with whom the most fanatical Socialist on earth is mild, and the wildest Anarchist an old-fashioned reactionary.

It must be this sentiment, however unconsciously it operates, that prompts the Frenchman to lift his hat and

stand still when a funeral passes. The rougher Englishman is apt to think this theatrical, but it is nothing of the kind. France is the land of social equality. Economical and class distinctions obtain there as elsewhere, but the moral distinction between the various sections of society is comparatively slight. This is partly a legacy of the Revolution, and partly owing to the genius of the people. It is one of the best features of the French character. For my part, I think the better of my kind when I see the Frenchman's lifted hat and bent head. Let the coffin be poor or costly, death is there, and love and grief, which make us all akin.

Nothing I have read about the dead Colossus of Germany has touched me like the following story told by one who knew him well. Bismarck was a good family man, and kind to his poor neighbors. Away from the turmoil of politics, and the glare of high public life, he found his humanity. When his old wife died, the veteran diplomatist sat in his nightshirt, with naked feet, on her bedside, weeping like a child. That is a sad-sweet picture, but I like the other better. Here it is, in the very words of the narrator:—

"In the home circle he was perfectly charming, easy-going, and good-natured. He was passionately fond of children, and I have seen him over and over again have a game with the little ones of his gardener, who were very familiar with him, and would not hesitate to climb upon his knee. Once, when his gardener's little girl died, the great statesman went to condole with him. He was dreadfully upset, and, whilst holding the poor father's hand, burst into tears, for he was very fond of the child. He kissed the little corpse, and himself placed a bunch of roses in its hand."

This is true life. This is eternal. Those tears of sympathy with a poor brother man in his distress are better to think of than all the blood shed at Gravelotte and Sedan. Weaving the threads of subtle diplomacy, flashing the sword of conquest, changing frontiers and making empires, are great things in the eye of the world. But the finest thing Napoleon ever said was, "Respect the burden, madam," as he drew aside a proud lady who stood in the way of a loaded laborer; and the finest thing I have read about Bismarck is this story of his sharing the sorrow of a poor father over the corpse of his little child.

Standing out against all the bloody villainies of David is his grief over his favorite child. "O Absalom, my son, my son; would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." And through all the tumultuous glories of Rome, and the shouts of her legions, and the ring of their swords on hostile helmets, pierces the musical wail of Catullus over his dead brother—a note of immortal love and grief that will find an echo in human hearts for ever.

Walt Whitman was well inspired in singing a hymn to Death. It is the great democrat and the great leveller. And it is the great softener of the human heart, as it is the great renewer of humanity. Death removes, and birth supplies, and thus the human race is kept ductile and progressive. Death also demonstrates our common nature by proving our common mortality. How absurd are pompous inscriptions on tombstones! Great, was he? a whole hand higher than his fellows? Yet he lies here, and all his pride has dwindled to those fading lines on that crumbling stone. We turn away to memorials more in keeping with the scene; to simple words of grief and affection, of rest and peace. All sprang from Nature and had their little day of mingled pleasure and pain, and all return for their last long sleep to her bosom.

G. W. FOOTE.

ETHICAL SANCTIONS.

(Concluded from page 498.)

As we pointed out in our article last week, we fail to see that Mr. Kidd, in his *Social Evolution*, has proved his allegation, that ethical sanctions are not to be found either in the individual or in the social organism. It is not clear that he believes in any supernatural being, and, if he does not, from what source are the sanctions derived? We have already showed that they could not have emanated from any of the alleged supernatural religions. Mr. Kidd himself admits that "a rational religion is a scientific impossibility." If so, how can moral sanctions be obtained therefrom? The very fact that different religions have prescribed different moral codes shows it to be impossible. The same with the Bible. In one passage the killing of human beings is forbidden by God, and in another passage special instructions are given by the same being to commit the prohibited crime. Conflicting injunctions are also to be found in the "inspired word" in reference to adultery, lying, retaliation, love, forgiveness, individual and general salvation, and many other acts which form part of the conduct of human life. Even Christianity itself has very wide and contradictory interpretations of the rules of morality. The Roman Catholics consider celibacy in male and female votaries, confession, penance, mortification, and even self-inflicted scourging, as being highly moral practices; whilst the Protestant sections of the same Christianity regard some or all of these usages as the most immoral. Buckle says: "The inquisitors were remarkable for an undeviating and uncorruptible integrity. Their most bitter enemy does not even insinuate a charge against the moral character of the inquisitors; whilst execrating the cruelty of their conduct, yet nothing can be said against the purity of their intentions." Many of the primitive religions had nothing whatever to do with what is regarded to-day as morality. Was not Professor Richie right in saying: "It has often happened that, from foolish, cruel, or degrading ceremonies being ranked as duties, the influence of the belief in the supernatural objects of worship has had a distinctly pernicious effect, the moral judgment being warped, and an unworthy standard being maintained?" And Emerson said: "Whatever is called religion effeminates and demoralises."

Briefly stated, those acts may be termed moral which tend to promote the happiness and general well-being both of individuals and of society at large. To this probably no exception will be taken; but the disputed point is, What are the sanctions for such ethical conduct? The theologian tells us that morality consists in obeying "the will of God." This, however, we deem a fallacy, inasmuch as, granting a God exists, we have no means of ascertaining what his will is. In the Bible, as we have already said, many wills contradictory in their nature are ascribed to its deity. Now, as they are all given upon the same authority, and as all cannot be obeyed, it is difficult to select any one that would not be annulled by complying with the others. Besides, in acting in accordance with what was thought to be in harmony with this conjectured will, conduct the most foolish, cruel, and pernicious has been the result. Apart from the long catalogue of such deeds as are recorded in the Bible, the belief in "God's will" as an ethical sanction has caused an untold sacrifice of human life. Under its influence mothers have cast their babes into rivers, fathers have plunged their knives into their innocent breasts, bodies have been mutilated, thousands of innocent persons have been sent to their graves for the imaginary crime of witchcraft, slavery has been perpetuated, and the worst forms of brutality have destroyed the happiness of numberless homes. Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Lectures on Ethics*, has shown that the "will of God" is no sanction for right doing. His words are: "The mother, though she should at the moment forget altogether that there is a God in nature, would still turn with moral horror from the thought of murdering the little prattler who is sporting at her knee, and who is not more beautiful to her eye by external charms and graces than beautiful to her heart by the thousand tendernesses which every day and almost every hour is developing; while the child, who perhaps has scarcely heard that there is a God, or who at least is ignorant of any will of God, in conformity with which virtue consists, is still in his very ignorance developing those moral feelings which are supposed to be inconsistent

with such ignorance, and would not have the same feeling of complacency in repaying the parental caresses with acts of intentional injury as when he repays them with expressions of reciprocal love. Of all the mothers who, at this moment, on the earth are exercised, and virtuously exercised, in maternal duties around the cradles of their infants, there is, perhaps, not one who is thinking that God has commanded her to love her offspring, and to perform for them the many offices of love that are necessary for preserving the lives which are so dear to her." We are aware that a small section of those who are termed "advanced Christians" have now given up the will of God as the groundwork of their morality. This, however, seems to us inconsistent with their faith, for the following reasons: (1) If the Bible God be the father of all, surely to act in accordance with his will should be the best guide in life; (2) Christian morality is supposed to consist of the teachings of the Bible, the alleged record of the will of God; (3) If God's will is not the basis of Christian ethics, what is, from the Christian standpoint?

By many persons it is affirmed that the faculty termed conscience determines right from wrong, and therefore it is that which forms the best sanction for ethical conduct. Certain theologians speak of conscience as the voice of God in man—a tribunal to which all the affairs of life may be brought with equal certainty of righteous settlement. Man's errors and sins have been looked upon as evidence of his deafness to this divine voice. It could never err, but man has always erred, it is alleged, because he has invariably rebelled against, and defied, its dictates. It is urged that, because the voice of conscience has been unheeded, Paganism became rife, and that the lofty Theism of the ancient Jews degenerated into superstitious idolatry—that the later Jews rejected the Messiah, and that Rationalism spreads to to-day. As the voice is the voice of God, its directions, it is contended, must be sound, and its commands must be just; the fault must always be in men, and the seat of this fault is in wilfulness and independence. Such a contention appears to us utterly fallacious when we remember the fact that the deeds of some who believed they obeyed the divine commands have been condemned by others who were no less confident that they were true to this divine voice within them. There is also the fact that many a man does, with the firmest conviction that he is obeying this inner guide, what at a later period he would give anything to undo, feeling that this, were it possible, would be his first duty. Moreover, the uncivilised man, whose conscience has had nothing of civilised education, considers it highly meritorious to deprive his enemy of his scalp as soon as he has the power to take it; and on the most trivial provocation, as well as in war, this and many other murderous acts are in perfect harmony with the conscience of savage men. Further, it must not be overlooked that the conscience of one period in the history of mankind has been passed, and left far behind by the conscience of a subsequent period; and what was done by the purest and noblest in one age, in another age is not done at all, another standard of morality having been reached. Just as opinions upon all intellectual matters change from generation to generation, so feelings on the question of duty, conceptions of righteousness, the nature and sense of obligation and responsibility change also, and from period to period there has been an evolution of morals and a deepening and strengthening of the sense and area of obligation.

Inasmuch as conscience is an educational result, and that education differs among men and nations, conscience cannot be logically accepted as an ethical sanction. Not only do the inhabitants of different countries vary considerably in regard to the dictates of conscience, according to the nature of their education, but the people of the same country will be found to be by no means agreed as to what is right and what is wrong, except in a few well-marked deeds. One man feels a conscientious objection to doing that which another man will positively believe to be a praiseworthy act. In this, as in other matters, education is all-potent over the mental character. We agree with the following statements by Mrs. Besant in her *True Basis of Morality*, a pamphlet written when she was a student of reason, and not simply an ardent devotee of emotion. The lady wrote: "It is often said that conscience directs man to hate evil, and to love good. There is considerable confusion of thought in this idea. Conscience does not enable a man to discern between good and evil; the decision as to

the morality or immorality of an action is made by the reason, whether that reason be enlightened or unenlightened. All that conscience does is to urge the man to follow that which the reason declares to be right. When the brain has declared 'such and such a thing is good,' then the conscience says, 'do it.' If the reason judge falsely, the conscience will then point to the *wrong* action as a duty, and thus it has happened that some of the worst actions in the world have been done at the command of conscience. The most cruel persecutions have been carried out with perfect conscientiousness; and priests, with streaming eyes and bleeding hearts, have burned heretics to the 'greater glory of God.' Conscience is not a safe guide—in fact, it is no guide at all; it is not the eye which chooses the path, but the foot which blindly carries us wherever the brain directs."

Our conclusion is that it should be the aim of every member of the human family to attain a high ethical standard. The sanction of such culture we regard to be the usefulness of our actions in promoting the happiness and the highest possible development of the physical, intellectual, and moral character of every man, woman, and child. In other words, the best and, as we think, the only trustworthy guide in human conduct is cultivated reason and a properly disciplined intellect.

CHARLES WATTS.

MORAL INSTRUCTION AND THE BIBLE.

SUPPOSE we succeed in introducing "non-theological" (I prefer to say *secular*) moral instruction into the State-aided schools of this country. Then shall any use be made of the Bible in such instruction? Mr. Cohen says No, and I say Yes. As Mr. Cohen and I are both Freethinkers, both in favor of abolishing the conception of God, and both opposed to special veneration of the Bible, our divergence of opinion seems to need explanation.

The Executive of the Moral Instruction League met on July 19, both Mr. Cohen and I being present. When the question came up whether the Bible should be placed in the children's hands during the moral instruction, we decided no. We were, in fact, agreed that, at present, no book—the Bible or any other book—need be recommended for use during the special moral lesson hour.

Then the question arose, Shall the teacher be allowed to include the Bible among the general literature from which he may draw illustrations for his lessons? The majority of the Executive answered Yes. Mr. Cohen has, in oversight, regarded the decision as much kinder to the Bible than it really was. We certainly did not resolve that the Bible should be employed as "a basis" of the instruction, and I trust to make this point quite clear as I go along.

The League has accepted, in general outline, a plan of teaching in personal and social duties. It comprises all the salient points of conduct—temperance, courage, kindness, truthfulness, industry, justice, refinement of taste, and the like. Everybody recognises that these ideas must be clothed with suitable illustrations. These illustrations will embrace stories from history and biography, fables, fairy tales, myths, and legends, interesting matter relating to science, natural history, etc. This is the method followed by any literary man who understands style—that is to say, who understands how to touch the feeling and imagination. The whole of literature will therefore be available for the teacher's use. As samples of books which I have myself borrowed from in preparing secular moral lessons I may mention Plutarch, Plato's *Dialogues*, the Talmud, the Buddhist *Birth-stories*, *Æsop's Fables*, Krilov's *Fables*, the Percy Anecdotes, Smiles's *Self-help*, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the Bible, etc., etc. And why not the Bible, so long as the teacher uses it as but one among many sources? May he not point to Abraham's treatment of Lot as a case of magnanimity? May he not tell the legend of Lot's wife to show how foolish is the spirit of shilly-shally and half-heartedness? May he not cite Moses relinquishing the honors of a palace as an example of a pioneer's loyalty to his cause? May he not ask the children to admire the generosity of King David in refusing to drink water which had been procured at the risk of human life? May he not quote Jeremiah's boldness in rebuking a king? May he not tell of Daniel's temperance, and Job's patience, and the good Samaritan's charity?

May he not indicate the democratic significance of a legend which represented a hero as born in a stable and laid in a manger? May he not even use Peter's dream on the housetop to suggest the coming age when no sincere opinion shall be counted vulgar or unclean?

Now, on Freethought principles, I protest against a veto on such a use of the Bible. If the teacher is left free to choose illustrations from the whole garden of literature except from the Bible, you will be treating the Bible as a Forbidden Tree, and saying: "In the day that thou quatest therefrom thou shalt surely be reprimanded by the School Board." Is this what Mr. Cohen wants? But will such a method secure his real object of the secularisation of the Bible? If the elementary school excludes the Bible, the Church will still proclaim it as the "word of God," and Freethought will have lost a chance. Yes, I repeat, lost a chance. It will be a death-blow to Bible-worship if ever we can set up a system which will place the Bible on the level of general literature. When the teacher can cite stories and maxims with equal freedom from Plato, the Bible, or (say) Jules Michelet's *History of France*, etc., the children will see things in the right proportion, and the "word of God" will be recognised as having no greater value—and often less—than the word of Victor Hugo, or Geoffrey Chaucer, or the Indian Hitopadesa.

And, besides all this, there is a fatal objection to the veto on the Bible—viz., that it is impracticable. In some form or other all the narrative and ethical portions of the Bible will be found interwoven into general literature. I do not refer to word-for-word quotation, but to allusion, commentary, and paraphrase. An immense amount of Biblical material could be recovered from the writings of Deists, Atheists, and Agnostics. The wonderful adventures of the Gadarene Pigs could be extracted (with pungent annotations!) from the pages of Huxley. If you drove the teacher away from the Gospels, he might find all he wanted in Renan! Kicked out of the Pentateuch, he would seek the Ark of Refuge in Colenso! And, warned off from the Prophets, he would dig for treasure in Paine's *Age of Reason*! For the Fall of Man he can have recourse to Milton, and for the Destruction of Sennacherib to Byron. Or he can select lines from the libretto of Handel's oratorios, or he can show pictures of Michael Angelo's Moses, or of Rubens' "Descent from the Cross." Is all this to be prohibited? I think we had better pause before we ask the Moral Instruction League to undertake so wild a crusade.

The Executive of the League does not propose the Bible as a *basis* of instruction. No basis is proposed except a certain plan, or syllabus, or detailed list of subjects. Let me take an example. Suppose a teacher is required to make the meaning and duty of Veracity clear to his scholars. Then the basis will be the principle of Veracity, and the illustrations from the classics, the Bible, history, biography, etc., will hold the second place. One teacher may choose this illustration, another may choose that, but both alike have to pursue the same end—the explanation of Truthfulness in word and conduct. The present system goes quite the other way about. It lays the Bible on the school desk, and demands that the children shall study that as a text, and draw from it whatever wit and wisdom they can. They fish for whatever comes up, and thus enormous areas of life and morals never get considered at all.

I add another important argument, though, so far, the League has pronounced no opinion on it. It is my conviction that the way of educational safety lies only through the Education Department—i.e., Government control. The Moral Instruction must be made part and parcel of the national code. The whole school-time must be placed under the supervision of the Government. At present the religious instruction, when and wherever given, stands outside the limits of Government inspection. From personal observation, I can vouch that all that part of school-work which is included under the view of the Department is practically and satisfactorily secular. When the Moral Instruction is ranked with other Code subjects, it will, by that very fact, drop all supernaturalism, and the teacher who imparted a sectarian (i.e., orthodox, Jewish, Christian, or Theistic) twist to any Biblical or other illustration would break the law. Of course, this surrender of the whole school-time to the Parliamentary Code will not happen for years to come. Meanwhile, the League can go

on with its propaganda, and secure many a concession by the partial secularisation of even the existing system. I am well aware of the numerous difficulties in the way. I do not know what Freethought is here for unless it is to remove such difficulties.

F. J. GOULD.

METHODISM AND THE SLAVE TRADE.

THE methods of Christian advocacy are, like the habits of Bret Harte's cat, strange and peculiar. From time to time one finds a handful of professing Christians, influenced more by the spirit of their times than the genius of their creed, taking part in various reform movements; and, notwithstanding that their conduct may have been totally opposed to Christian tradition and doctrine, it is still brought forward by after generations of believers as ample evidence of the progressive nature of Christianity.

That these men were fiercely denounced by the vast majority of their co-religionists, who based their denunciations upon the clearest declarations of the Christian scriptures, matters little; they called themselves Christians, and that is quite sufficient for the hard-pressed apologist, anxious to place to the credit of Christianity a reform it was not strong enough to strangle.

Of course, to any rational student of social phenomena, the carrying out of a reform in the name of a religion that is strongly opposed to it is a circumstance that admits of easy explanation. In a country that is professedly Christian, and where not one in a thousand base their profession of faith upon a conscientious examination of its principles, it is perfectly natural that the larger part of all that is done should be done in the name of the current religion, and that there should be attributed to it that which is really the result of altogether another set of forces. A Mohammedan in Turkey would be as ready to ascribe to the influence of the Koran any progressive work he was engaged in, as a Christian in London would be to attribute it to the influence of the Bible; both of them being equally blind to the operation of those social forces which, however much religion may distort, cannot be altogether suppressed.

All this, however, is a closed book to the ordinary Christian advocate, and thus we find that ideas which very slowly fought their way into public favor in the face of Christianity's organised opposition are afterwards claimed as a direct result of the benign influence of the Christian creed.

The case of the abolition of slavery is a good illustration of this. Nothing is clearer than that the Old and New Testaments furnish an emphatic endorsement of the slave system. The former contains a large number of regulations upon the subject, some of them unsurpassed for their brutality; and the latter, in addition to the policy of non-resistance laid down by Jesus, contains emphatic injunctions to slaves to give to their masters, good or bad, the same unquestioning obedience they are commanded to render to Christ himself.* It is certain, also, that the early Church showed no decided opposition to the slavery it found established in the Roman Empire. Lecky notes that the emancipatory legislation that had been going on for several centuries before Constantine came to an abrupt stop with the conversion of the Empire, that the number of slaves was greater under Christianity than under Paganism, that "slavery was distinctly and formally recognised by Christianity, and no religion ever labored more to encourage a habit of docility and passive obedience."†

And when we add that the black slave trade was inaugurated by Christian Spain in the sixteenth century, that the great Bossuet declared that "to condemn slavery was to condemn the Holy Ghost," that a century later the English Church was transporting Irishmen and Scotchmen as slaves to Barbadoes, that millions of money had to be spent and hundreds of lives lost to compel Christians to abandon the traffic in England and America, and that in the latter country the work was practically commenced by Thomas Paine in 1775, and finished by Lincoln, who, when charged on the political platform with unbelief in Christianity, declared that he would die sooner than deny it, it would appear that the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus have little to pride themselves upon in this matter.

But the ways of God are not more puzzling than the reasoning of some of his followers, and the Rev. Dr. Hamilton, American delegate to the Methodist Conference just concluded at Hull, once more dragged in the abolition of slavery as a piece of Christian evidence, with the difference that, whereas others are content to put it to the influence of Christianity in general, Dr. Hamilton seemed inclined to go the whole hog and place it all to the credit of the Methodist Church.

That John Wesley was so far untrue to his Bible as to brand the slave trade as "the execrable sum of all villainies," is a circumstance for which all right-thinking men will render him due credit; but when Dr. Hamilton adds that in America "Methodist preachers went everywhere, stirring the conscience against slavery," and further informed his hearers that "no slaveholder was allowed to be a member of the Methodist Church, while its preachers were accustomed, in their sermons, to speak of the injustice of slavery," one can only charge him as being either ignorant of the history of his own Church, or the possessor of a memory singularly and conveniently weak.

The plain fact of the matter is that when the principles laid down by such men as Paine, Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson—none of whom were Christians—and the example in Europe of the French Revolution, began to show their effect in a growing dislike to the slave traffic, the abolition movement in America found a strongly organised Christian opposition that proved itself to be the greatest obstacle to its work of emancipating the slave. Lloyd Garrison, believer as he professed to be, was driven to admit that "American Christianity is the main pillar of American slavery," and that the Church, "whether Unitarian or Orthodox, Baptist or Methodist, Universalist or Episcopal, Roman Catholic or Christian, is the stronghold of slavery."*

I have no intention in this article of dealing with the opposition the Abolitionists received from all branches of the Christian Church; it would require a bulky volume to do the subject justice. My purpose is to show the relation the American Methodist Church bore to the movement of emancipation, and the following official utterances of that body will put Dr. Hamilton's statement in its true colors. It is to be noted that the expressions of opinion which follow are not from individuals, but the deliberate convictions of conferences brought together for the consideration of the subject.

In 1836 the Georgia Annual Conference, finding that some evil persons had charged the Methodist Episcopal Church with believing slavery to be an evil, resolved: "That it is the sense of the Georgia Annual Conference that slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil." Further: "That we view slavery as a civil and domestic institution, and one with which, as ministers of Christ, we have nothing to do."†

The South Carolina Conference went further still, and declared: "That without a new revelation from heaven no man was authorised to pronounce slavery wrong." In the same year the Wesleyan Methodist Church, of which Dr. Hamilton is a member, held its annual session in Cincinnati, and resolved as follows: "Resolved by the delegates of the Annual Conference, in general conference assembled, that they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slaveholding States of this Union." And this resolution was followed by the Conference issuing an address to the Churches exhorting members "to abstain from all abolition movements and associations, and to refrain from patronising any of their publications." Yet again, in the same year, at another conference held in New York, it was decided that no one should be elected to any office in the Church unless he gave a distinct pledge that he would refrain from discussing the subject.‡ In New Hampshire, Methodist bishops issued a pastoral letter against abolition, and warned preachers against placing their pulpits at the disposal of its advocates. At the same time, Garrison characterised Wilbur Fisk, President of the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., as an "abusive and malignant opponent of abolition."§

* *Life*, by his children, vol. i., pp. 479-80.

† Quoted in Key to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, p. 386.

‡ Quoted in a pamphlet entitled *The Church the Bulwark of Slavery*, by the Hon. J. G. Birney.

§ *Life*, vol. ii., p. 139.

* See Ephesians vi. 5, 1 Peter ii. 13-20.

† *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., pp. 64, 66, 70.

Four years later (1840) one of the largest of the *Northern* Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Baltimore, publicly disclaimed any fellowship with abolitionists, and at the same time fully endorsed the prohibition of the testimony of a colored person against a white in courts of law.* And when, five years later, the Northern Churches began to show signs of a better spirit, the immediate result was the secession of a number of organizations from the general body "to be known by the style and title of the Methodist Episcopal Church South."† Fifteen years later (1860) an attempt was made to induce the clergy of the Methodist Church to sign a protest against slavery. The ministry was then 14,000 strong, but only 241 would append their signatures to the document.‡

The Leeds Anti-Slavery Society's report for the same year contains a letter from the Rev. H. Mattison, of New York, travelling preacher in the Northern Methodist Episcopal Church, from which I take the following:—

"I am fully satisfied from figures that we cannot have to-day less than 10,000 slave-holders and 100,000 slaves in our Northern Methodist Episcopal Church, and the number is rapidly increasing every year. And, still worse, our people raise, and buy, and sell slaves as others do, without rebuke or hindrance."

My next instance will show that Mr. Mattison was not exaggerating. On the twenty-sixth day of the Methodist Conference, held at Buffalo in 1860, the report of a committee on the subject of slavery was brought before the meeting. The temper of the Conference may be gathered from the fact that, when one delegate declared it to be their intention to place on the minutes of the Conference a prohibition of slavery, it was authoritatively said that not ten men in the meeting would support such a proposal.

"I subscribe myself," said the Rev. J. C. Tortell, Methodist minister of South Carolina, "the friend of the Bible and the enemy of abolitionism." The rev. gentleman was to be congratulated upon the frankness of his speech and the clearness of his views. The friends of the Bible were the enemies of the abolitionists, as the latter testified over and over again. And so certain were the champions of slavery of the support of the Bible that the Young Men's American Bible Association issued a special edition of the New Testament, with marked and annotated passages, as an anti-abolitionist pamphlet.§

It is needless to multiply instances. Pages might be filled with conference resolutions and sermons condemning abolition, or urging obedience upon the slaves, and that without travelling outside the Methodist Church. I have confined my remarks to this body, not because it was the greatest sinner in this matter—many other churches were worse, and the Presbyterians worst of all—but so that readers of the *Freethinker* might see how much truth there is in the statement that "Methodist preachers went everywhere stirring the conscience against slavery," and that "no slaveholder was allowed to be a member of the Methodist Church." And a timely comment upon the influence of Christianity comes in the daily papers of August 3, which contain accounts of two thousand negroes and whites in New York engaged with knife and revolver in ventilating the race hatred which Dr. Hamilton believes Christianity has destroyed.

That there have been good men in the Methodist Church, whose common sense was stronger than their religious beliefs, is gladly admitted; but nothing can be more absurd than to take these few exceptions, whose bitterest opponents were found among the members of their own body, and apply their action to the whole of the Methodist connection. In the main, the Methodist Church has been pretty much as other churches. Where there has been no public outcry against an abuse, it has been, at best, passively acquiescent in its existence. It has only yielded and joined in the cry for reform when the force of public opinion has made the reform more or less imperative, and therefore more or less profitable.

Fundamentally, the Methodist Church has the same beliefs as other Christian bodies; it has the same Bible to guide its counsels and direct its actions, and it cannot, therefore, pride itself upon any religious superiority over its neighbors. And if the Methodist, in common with

other Churches, has turned its back upon the plainest teachings of the religion it professes to expound and has given up slavery, as it was forced to give up witchcraft, the belief in a flat earth, special creation, etc., etc., there is here only one more instance of the manner in which even the most cherished religious convictions are modified, and finally swept on one side, by the diffusion of knowledge and the development of society.

C. COHEN.

ROMAN CATHOLIC, ANGLICAN, AND NON-CONFORMIST.

FREETHINKERS who are familiar with the works of the late Cardinal Newman will remember how exceedingly useful they are to the Rationalist. In his efforts to demolish Protestantism, the Cardinal places in the hands of sceptics all sorts of useful weapons. In *The Present Position of Catholics*, for instance, he fairly smashes his religious opponents; but, in doing so, he furnishes the Freethinker with a large number of arguments with which to assail Catholicism. Indeed, it is not too much to say that every argument and illustration he uses against the Protestant tells with at least equal effect against the Roman Catholic Church. Take, for example, what he says about the establishment of Protestantism. Protestantism, he argues, would never have been anything like the force it now is in England if it had not been established and endowed by the State. It was, he says, established by force and fraud, and is maintained by the same means. That the Cardinal is right here admits of no denial; but his remarks on this head are equally true of Roman Catholicism. Where would Roman Catholicism have been if it had not been established and endowed by Constantine, Charlemagne, and others? Christianity—i.e., Roman Catholicism—was established, as the late Justice Stephen well said, by exhausting all the terrors of this world and the next. The persecution of Catholics by Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a mere nothing as compared with Charlemagne's treatment of the Saxons; and, as regards the continuance of fraud as a means of maintaining Protestantism, well, "Mumpsimus still reigns," as the Cardinal wittily remarks. But what shall we say of such stories as that so solemnly told about the Holy Shroud?

Newman points out how fallacious it is to suppose that the age of a system or creed proves its truth. Referring, by way of illustration, to the Pharisees, he says:—

"They profess to speak for themselves, they bear witness to themselves, they are their own evidence, and, as might have been expected, they are not trustworthy. They are mere frauds; they came, indeed, down the stream of time, but that is no recommendation, it only puts the fraud higher up. It may make it venerable; it can never make it true. Yet it is remarkable how positive and fanatical the Pharisees were in maintaining the fraud; they were irritated, nay, maddened, at hearing themselves denounced; they rose up fiercely against their denouncers, and thought they did God a service in putting them to death."

How peculiarly applicable these words are to the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic who places Newman's works in the hands of a Rationalist acts like a general would in putting additional guns at the disposal of the enemy. The Cardinal wrote, of course, to convince Protestants, and his books would no doubt be of great service in this direction if only Anglicans and Nonconformists were amenable to argument. Let a Protestant set aside prejudice, let him read carefully and consider candidly what Newman says in *The Present Position of Catholics* and *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, and the chances are that he will not remain a Protestant. It will probably occur to him that, since he takes so much on faith, there is no reason why he should not believe more; and that, given the premises on which both Catholic and Protestant are agreed, all the extras believed in by Catholics are but logical developments of these premises. In the alternative he may be led to inquire further, with the inevitable result of finding that what is called Christianity by both Catholic and Protestant is just a refurbishing, under a new name, of myths and legends which antedate the Christian era by thousands of years. Unfortunately, however, neither Anglican nor

* *Journal of General Conference*, p. 109.

† *American States, Churches, and the War*, by J. W. Bulme, p. 244.

‡ *Report of New York Anti-Slavery Society, 1860*, p. 282.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

Nonconformist is inclined to give the Catholic a fair hearing.

The Anglican, of course, has no reply to offer. The Church of England is undeniably the creature of the State, and can only do what its creator allows. It owes all its power to what John Bright called its "adulterous connection" with the State, and apart from the State it is nothing.

The Nonconformist, however, holds that Newman's strictures do not affect him, inasmuch as Nonconformity has never been established or endowed. Nonconformists, we are told, are more numerous than either Catholics or Anglicans, and yet Nonconformity has never received State patronage. This proud boast is so frequently heard at the present time that it may be worth while to briefly notice it.

What, then, is meant when it is said that Nonconformity has never been established or endowed? Nonconformity, as distinguished from both Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, means:—

1. The right to adopt *any* mode of divine worship.
2. The right to set up *any* method of church or chapel government.
3. The right to *privately* endow any church or chapel organisation.

This is what differentiates Nonconformity from Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, and if Nonconformists would only bear it in mind they would see that they have little to boast of. It is not to their *religion* that they owe their numerical strength; they inherited their religious ideas from the Roman Catholics. It is to the Roman Catholic Church they are indebted for the Bible, on which they profess to take their stand. As for the right of private judgment, that is a principle distinctly denied by Christ. Here are the words, put into the mouth of Jesus, in Mark xvi.:—

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Now, this is plain language, and if it be true it follows that no honest man can be saved unless he believes these words. But how *can* an honest man believe them? Certainly, the Nonconformist does not, though he *professes* to, believe in Christ.

The Peculiar People would appear to accept what Christ says as to the treatment of the sick, though even they would probably object to drink "any deadly thing," notwithstanding his assurance that "it shall not hurt them."

The right of private judgment is not a Christian principle; it is an affirmation of the supremacy of fallible human reason. And it is to their assertion of this Secularist principle, as against Pope and Prayer Book, that the success of Nonconformity is due. Nonconformity has now been established by law for centuries; and, more fortunate than the Rationalist, who is still outside the pale of the law, the Nonconformist has for long enjoyed perfect security, in so far as the right of private endowment is concerned. This is the real secret of his success. Had Nonconformity been harassed and hampered as Rationalism has always been, Nonconformists would, no doubt, still have been very numerous; but, in all probability, they would have been very much in the same position as Rationalists now are so far as effective organisation is concerned. In religion, as in commerce, money is essential.

ANDREW LIDDLE.

Atheism and the French Revolution.

"The first political demonstration of Atheism was attended by some of the excesses, the folly, the extravagances that stained the growth of Christianity. On the whole, it is a very mild story compared with the atrocities of the Jewish records or the crimes of Catholicism. The worst charge against the party of Chaumette is that they were intolerant, and the charge is deplorably true; but this charge cannot lie in the mouth of persecuting churches."—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., "Miscellanies," vol. i., p. 77.*

SECULAR FACTS AND CHRISTIAN FICTIONS.

(The S.P.C.K. recently celebrated its bi-centenary.)

You've heard of the funny "Society
For promoting Christian Knowledge,"
A mixture of mercantile piety
And ignorance learnt at college.
It publishes booklets and tracts
Of fairy tales, sandwiched with facts;
The facts are selected,
The tales are "explained";
When clear, they're rejected;
When vague, they're retained.

This solemnly silly Society
For promoting Christian fictions
Attunes, for the victims of piety,
Inconvenient contradictions;
This foolishly artful Society
For promoting Christian fables
Pretends to remove contrariety
By adjusting names and labels.
This mixture of science and myth—
The sop it soothes simpletons with—
It gives to our ignorant youth
As "knowledge" that's "Christian" forsooth!
Of knowledge that's "Christian" there's none;
The true tree of knowledge is *one*;
'Tis rooted in nature molecular,
A secular growth that is secular.

As "knowledge," this faction professes
That Satan all madmen possesses;
It says that a man was a "dummy,"
Through having Old Nick in his "tummy."
It grants that the earth is a ball,
And teaches directness of light,
Yet says that a man saw it *all*
At *once* from a definite height.
It teaches the "constants" of science,
Including, of course, "uniformity,"
Yet preaches what bids them defiance—
A pious, but lying, enormity!
It states contradictories sweetly,
As if it were stating the truth,
And wraps them up—O so discreetly!—
With much that's attractive to youth.

In Truth all its trust is,
Till policy stops it,
And then, like Procrustes,
It lengthens and lops it.
With business acumen,
It strives to combine
Its facts, which are human,
With falsehoods divine.
By Folly 'twas founded,
By Fraud it was led,
Its praise is still sounded,
For neither is dead.

So, pious Deceit the perennial,
And Folly the multi-centennial,
Are loudly acclaiming to-day
This faction malarian,
This bi-centenarian,
This S. for promoting C. K.
G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

ZOLA has gained a verdict with damages against the libellers of his long-dead father, which shows that there is some sense of equity still left in the French courts. Some "popular" journalists took it into their heads that the best way to answer Zola's defence of Dreyfus was to say: "Your father was a thief." It doesn't seem to have any sort of connection with the guilt or innocence of Dreyfus, and, besides, it is an infamous falsehood. But the mere fact that such vile weapons are resorted to shows the frightful virulence with which Zola and his friends are assailed.

M. Judet is one of the journalists against whom Zola obtained a verdict for libelling his dead father. Although this man's conduct was so infamous, he was vociferously applauded by the mob as he left the court, while a bystander who raised a cheer for Zola had to run for his life. But worse than this remains. It is stated without contradiction that the Ministry of War allowed M. Judet free access to the documents on which he professed to found his lying accusations against Zola's father, while it refused a sight of them to Zola. In the name of the honor of the Army the honor of France is being sacrificed.

The anti-Dreyfus fever—that is to say, the Army fever—is raging very badly in France. Even a scientific man like Professor Grimaux is not left unmolested. He was President of the Scientific Congress at Nantes, and because he was known to sympathise with Zola the mob made a rush for him at the railway station, and the police had great difficulty in protecting him from their fury. M. Guyot, who accompanied him, was severely injured, and narrowly escaped lynching. All the signs in France point to a catastrophe. The Church, the Jew baiters, and the Army are the masters of the nation by commanding the passions of the multitude, and something or other is bound to happen.

The House of Lords has been true to itself and its traditions. In spite of Lord Salisbury's appeal, the hereditary Landlords' League has thrown out the Conscience Clause from the new Vaccination Bill. Their lordships are satisfied that vaccination is a good thing, and that the rule should be "You've got to have it whether you want it or not." Of course the Bill will have to go back to the House of Commons, where the Conscience Clause will no doubt be reinserted. Will the Lords reject it again? Or will they take Lord Salisbury's advice and let it pass? In any case, they will never be able to force the vaccination nostrum upon the English people. The thing is doomed. It is dying of being found out.

As we go to press we see that the Lords have swallowed the Vaccination pill. Lord Salisbury gave them another talking to, and the Government bill was carried by a majority, Conscience Clause and all. This will be a sore affliction to the great "Tay Pay."

All the gods in the world were created by fear. So said the Roman poet, and it is true to the point of demonstration. As far as the mass of mankind are concerned, it has always been necessary to frighten them into religion. You may brimstone them into it, but you will never treacle them into it. They have always been very indifferent about heaven. The way to excite and secure them is to preach hell hot, without sugar. If *that* fails, the case is hopeless, and the game must be given up as utterly played out.

The truth of this is curiously exemplified by a letter in last week's *Christian World*. A "Pastor" says that he used to preach the Gospel of terrors, but for ten years he has discarded it for "the more tender and reasonable message" of God's fatherhood. But he finds that this message "only appeals to the few." "Somehow," he says, "it does not lay hold of the masses like the older, even harder Gospel." Crowds come to hear, but no souls are "saved." The poor "Pastor" confesses that he is "perplexed, humbled, and pained."

The truth is that Christianity is doomed unless it can resuscitate the Devil and rekindle the fires of Hell. You may give treacle *with* the brimstone, to make it a little more palatable to the fastidious, but it is always the brimstone, and not the treacle, which is the active ingredient.

A Ritualist manual states that "The Devil was the first Protestant." This shocks the true blue Protestants. They forget—perhaps they don't know—that the older Protestants used to say that the Devil was the first Papist.

Dr. Johnson said that the Devil was the first Whig, and no doubt the Whigs thought he was the first Tory.

They do some things better in France than in England. In our country condemned prisoners who are afterwards found to be innocent are facetiously "pardoned" and liberated without the slightest compensation. Three persons condemned at Rouen in 1893 have just been re-tried and acquitted, and the Court awarded the two men 30,000 francs each, and the woman 10,000 francs, as compensation.

Extremes meet. The *Christian World* announces a bazaar at South-place Institute, and immediately afterwards the opening of a new Peculiar People church at Southend. Evidently the "Peculiarials" have not been suppressed by the Old Bailey verdicts of manslaughter.

A Nonconformist journal complains that in over 8,000 places in the country, and in 13,000 elementary schools, Nonconformists are refused appointments as teachers. It does not chronicle the fact that Freethinkers are refused appointments in what the man in the street calls "the blooming lot."

The death of Dr. Aveling, so soon after the suicide of Eleanor Marx, closes a melancholy story. Aveling did not possess much originality, but he had a very decided capacity for popularising other men's teaching, especially in science. He might have earned a good income, and been of considerable service to the progressive movement, if he had only possessed more stability of character.

A Mormon was preaching on Tunbridge Wells Common, and in the course of his address he used the phrase, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," when a wag in the audience shouted: "And one wife."

The United States government thought it had settled polygamy in Utah, but it has done nothing of the kind. The State administration is wholly in the hands of Mormons, or their nominees, and over two thousand men have returned to the polygamous status in Salt Lake City. Elder Roberts openly advocates "plural marriage." Indeed, he declares that "modern Christians must either have to tolerate polygamy, or give up for ever the glorious hope of resting in Abraham's bosom." Mormon missionaries are said to be making many converts all over the States.

"Much indignation," says the *Boston American Sentinel*, "is expressed over the execrable taste of the men in the post-office department at Washington, who have put on the new one cent postage stamps a purely Jesuit picture—that of Marquette, with his crucifix, etc. There is not in this world anywhere another nation that would be guilty of such a thing—certainly no so-called Roman Catholic nation such as Mexico, or Belgium, or Italy. Why a Jesuit denominational picture should be put on public paper is a problem. Of all times in our history this is the very worst for such a lamentable display of ignorance or truculency."

Of course the *Rock* is a peaceful paper, when its blood is not up; but its sanguine fluid gets sanguinary hot when the missionary business is interfered with. Russian insolence and aggression in the east of Asia are bad enough under any aspect, but the *Rock* says: "It must not be forgotten that higher than commercial interests are at stake. Russian control means a closed door to Evangelical faith." Evidently the *Rock* is willing to see a big war, if necessary, for the Evangelical faith. So should we be, if Christian ministers did all the fighting.

Brighton-street E.U. Congregational Chapel, Edinburgh, a few years ago, cut off from its membership one who had outraged the feelings of his minister and kirk-session by becoming a shareholder in a brewery. Recently the chapel was put up to auction and sold for £2,650 to Mr. William Menelaws, of the firm of James Gray, Sons, and Company, wholesale wine and spirit merchants. It will be used as a storehouse of liquor. Once the building was full of the spirit of the Lord; soon it will be full of another spirit called whiskey.

"Pride of the Oval, Lord of Lords." This is a blasphemous line from a poem in the *Daily News* on Dr. W. G. Grace. Shocking! shocking!

Major Boitscheff, who was recently hung in Bulgaria for the brutal murder of Anna Szimon, asked to have his hands free at his execution, because he wished to make the sign of the Cross when he died. Mr. Wilson Barrett ought to work that into his famous play somehow.

The dear old orthodox *Rock* complains that "Professors Cheyne and Driver, and others, coolly relegate the Bible to the position of old wives' fables." As for Dean Farrar, he "babbles about the mythological origin of the Book of Daniel." All such divines are "dethroning God and rejecting his revelation." What a happy expression! *Dethroning God!* If he does not exist, you can't dethrone him; and if he does exist, how the devil are you going to do it? Messrs. Cheyne, Driver, and Farrar, or perhaps the *Rock*, should explain the process.

It is stated, and there is reason to believe that the statements are correct (the *Rock* says), that there are 1,000,000 villages in China in which the Gospel has never been proclaimed; that the Bible has only been translated into about seventy of the 591 languages and dialects that are found in Africa; that in Japan there are 185 times as many heathen temples as there are Protestant Christian workers; that in one province of India, containing 24,000,000 people, there are only six missionaries of any Church or Society; and that every hour 2,570 people die who have not even been told about the Savior of the world.

"This man Hooley," the *Daily News* says, "was for a short time the idol of a very vulgar, greedy, and contemptible section of London society. They patronised him, and he lined their pockets. He was a pillar of the Church, and a benefactor of St. Paul's Cathedral."

The Catholic Church does not recognise that animals have any rights; God gave them to man to use at his pleasure. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Society for the Protection of Animals has such a warm time in Naples. An attempt was made to assassinate its honorary director, Mr. Leonard T. Hawksley, who has only just recovered, after five months' illness, from the effects of his wounds. During

the last two years no less than thirteen drivers have been prosecuted for knocking out their horses' eyes, and four for beating them till they fell dead in the street.

Thomas Jones murdered Mary Barton, with whom he lived after deserting his wife. He had a quarrel with the poor woman, and the next morning her body was discovered in the snow on a secluded hill in the neighborhood, all but naked, and covered with wounds and bruises. Jones was hung at Carnarvon Gaol on August 3. He solemnly protested his innocence, and frequently appealed to heaven to bear out his protestations. But a judge and twelve jurymen were of a different opinion.

A pious adventurer has been sentenced at the County of London Sessions at Newington to five years' penal servitude and two years' police supervision. His real name appears to be Samuel Lee. He wore in the dock a black uniform of semi-clerical cut, his cap and sleeves being elaborately ornamented with blue and gold bands, and crosses with the words "Jesus Only" and "Salvation Catholic Church." The charge against him was obtaining six cycles by false pretences. After the verdict of Guilty, a police inspector gave the court a long account of the prisoner's career. In 1878 he was sentenced to two months' hard labor; at Durban, South Africa, in 1880, three months; at Hants Assizes in 1883, twelve months; and in 1885, at Wolverhampton, five years' penal servitude. He was released on licence, but shortly afterwards was sent back to complete his sentence. At Richmond, in 1891, he was ordered three months' imprisonment; and the same year, at Dublin, he received a second term of five years' penal servitude for fraud. Then he posed as "Rev. S. Stanhope, B.A.," and, for the purposes of obtaining charitable contributions by false pretences, started a bogus mission, a convalescent home, and schools. Released in 1895 on ticket-of-leave, he again got into trouble, and, besides being sent back to finish his sentence, was ordered fifteen months' extra punishment. With the exception of a sentence of 336 days, passed for deserting the Army at Durban, all convictions of the prisoner have been for fraudulent practices, generally bogus missions, in which the prisoner represented himself as a clerk in holy orders. He had used the aliases of the "Rev. Glenwood" and the "Rev. Nicholson," and the police further alleged that everything he got he obtained by fraud. When his five years' retirement is over he will probably go to work in the Lord's vineyard again.

A *Daily News* man has been interviewing the little band of Tolstoi Christians at Purlough, in Essex. One of them declared, as Tolstoi does, that the use of all force is immoral. "But," said the interviewer, "if you saw a ruffian jumping on a woman's chest, would it be immoral to interfere?" The Tolstoi Christian answered "Yes," but he admitted that "the old instinct would probably assert itself." We should hope so.

When the Yankees were first at Manila, the Archbishop of that city called upon the inhabitants to fight against the enemy, whom he described as cruel and bloodthirsty savages. This same Archbishop has now sought the protection of the Yankees against the native insurgents, who have threatened to massacre all the Catholic priests.

The followers of the meek and lowly Jesus still pursue their ghoulish methods over the dead bodies of their opponents. The death-bed lie has been used about Bradlaugh so much that his daughter has been compelled to publish a pamphlet setting forth the truth, which Christian men and women do not want to hear. Bismarck, a man of powerful physique, died recently, and, it is said, in agony. The leading Catholic paper, published in Berlin, actually states in a leader on the subject that it was owing to his opposition to the great lying Catholic Church. Poor Bismarck, the hyenas are upon you! If things go on at this rate, a new and enlarged edition of *Infidel Death-Beds* will be necessary, with an appendix on Christian lies about Christians.

The Dean of Winchester caused a sensation recently by his remarks at a certain temperance meeting. But, not content with this notoriety, he creates a terrible commotion about the behavior of the Winchester children on the occasion of the visit of Princess Beatrice to that town. It appears that the "young barbarians all at play" shouted and cheered in childlike and indecorous fashion. This so annoyed the reverend gent that he wrote a letter to the local papers stigmatising the behavior of the children as disgraceful, and calling on the police for protection. In addition, he launched into a denunciation of the training of the children on the part of parents and teachers. Probably the Dean wants to go back to the good old Bible methods of crushing little children, and is praying for the bears of Elisha and the sword of Herod.

Mr. Edmund Tearle produced a play at the Prince of

Wales Theatre, Birmingham, called "The Christian's Cross and the Martyr's Crown," which goes "one better" than Mr. Wilson Barrett's "Sign of the Cross" in the way of physical horrors. It was severely criticised by Mr. Howard Gray in the *Birmingham Post*, and as the gate-money fell off Mr. Tearle brought an action against that journal, obtaining a verdict and £40 damages. No doubt the jury were good Christians, but their verdict is ridiculous. They appear to think that the duty of a critic is only to praise. Mr. Tearle has his £40 and his pious blood-and-thunder play. Let him make the most of it. And let the newspapers leave him severely alone. The man who accepts praise and treats criticism as libel should be left to stew in his own juice.

Springburn Parish Church has a new minister, who, according to the local *Advertiser*, is "a young man with all the ardor of his years"—or his want of them. In the course of a recent sermon on "Christ and the Democracy," the Rev. Mr. Dickie was good enough to say that "the most aggressive Atheists, such as Mr. George Jacob Holyoake [heaven save the mark!] and Mr. Foote, the editor of the *Freethinker*, were almost in despair at the rapid growth visible in the Christian religion, even in this intelligent, civilised, and highly sceptical age." How strange that this news should come to us all the way from Scotland! We know Mr. Foote pretty well, but we were ignorant of his being afflicted with this particular form of "despair." We have consulted him on the subject, and he tells us that Mr. Dickie is romancing. Mr. Foote does not believe that Christianity is growing, but that it is dying.

Mr. Dickie told his congregation, who were probably all as ignorant as himself, that "the first hospital in existence on the globe was built at Edessa by the early Christians." As a matter of fact, public hospitals, for animals as well as human beings, were erected by the Buddhist King Asoka in India in the fourth century before Christ. In Greece, too, every temple of Æsculapius, the god of healing, was really a free hospital. Mr. Dickie may have all the ardor of his years, but it is a poor substitute for accurate information.

Yankees are all right when the fighting is on, but what bletherinskites are the men of God they leave behind them! There is the Rev. W. C. Blakeman, for instance, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, New York. Just hear him! "In the victories of Manila and Santiago," he says, "God has shown his hand. Dewey and Sampson have been handling God's lightnings." The reverend gentleman overlooks the fact that "God's lightnings" were wielded against a poor decadent nation like Spain, and that they wouldn't have been quite as effective against a live nation with first-class battleships, up-to-date guns, and gunners who could shoot. Besides, we thought the Spaniards were more pious than the Yankees. Anyhow, they are *very* pious, and God oughtn't to be down upon them so badly.

Rev. B. Nagarkhar, of the Brahma-Somaj, has been preaching eloquently in a Unitarian church on the Isle of Wight. He maintained that the "inner spirit" was the test of all revelation, and that the time was coming when universal Theism would prevail in all civilised countries. But what is this "inner spirit" save the light of man's natural intelligence? To call it a "revelation" is to talk mysticism, which has always been one of the curses of India. Men go listening to the oracle in their "innards" until they become blind and deaf to the truths of nature.

An unusual incident, the *Daily News* says, occurred on Sunday morning at a Dissenting chapel in East London. A member of the congregation was called upon to offer up a prayer, and after addressing the Lord for a quarter of an hour he began to invoke the divine blessing on the members of the Royal Family, whom he proceeded to mention in detail. He got as far as the Duke and Duchess of York, when a gruff voice exclaimed: "Pile 'om together." This brought the prayer to a hasty conclusion.

Rev. John Davis, rector of Llanynyr, Ruthin, went out for a walk, but did not return, and his body was found in the river some miles from his home. His son committed suicide in London some years ago. Query for Talmage, Were the father and son both Atheists?

According to the *North China Herald*, the Shanghai magistrate issued a public proclamation about the approaching eclipse of the moon, which he describes as going to be "eaten up." All loyal citizens are called upon to help him to make as much noise as possible "to rescue the devoured luminary." What a chance for the Salvation Army! They are magnificent at noise, and the Shanghai magistrate would probably pay a decent, if not a fair, price for their services. General Booth ought to see to this.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 14, Clerkenwell Green and Regent's Park ;
21, Finsbury Park ; 28, Victoria Park.
September 4, Peckham Rye.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 14, Clerkenwell Green ; 21, Finsbury Park ; e., Secular Hall, Camberwell ; 28, Victoria Park. September 4, Victoria Park.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

ISHMAEL.—We have taken all the precautions you suggest in the Brown case. All the details were carefully ascertained, including copies of the postcards for which Brown was prosecuted. We are perfectly satisfied, and cannot do more.

STUDENT.—Dr. Skeats' edition of Chaucer in one volume at seven-and-six is probably the best for you. The library edition is expensive. The Globe edition of Spenser is a good one, though the type is rather small. It is a disgrace that we have no really cheap complete editions of the Elizabethan dramatists, excepting Shakespeare. The Mermaid Series of select plays is an excellent and cheap collection.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Pleased to learn that you endorse our advice to open-air speakers on the Freethought side, especially in Hyde Park. Tact and good temper are always necessary in addressing miscellaneous, and often hostile, gatherings. No doubt Christian Evidence speakers are sometimes very provoking, but two bad tempers do not make a good one. It is far better to leave an insulting Christian speaker severely alone. Our people should really be discreet enough to do this, instead of helping him to get an audience. Mr. Waldron, for instance, is not exactly a genius. He would hardly set the world, or even Hyde Park, on fire by himself. If he indulges in personalities, it is foolish to pay him any sort of attention. The best plan is to let him find his own level.

R. W. D. NANKIVELL.—Received with thanks.

G. J. WARREN applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. He writes characteristically: "Sorry you have had such a rough time lately. Used to a bit, I know; but a little brighter period will be welcome and deserved. I had doubts whether the old laws could be dodged, but you appear to have managed it. You are entitled to the whole credit of launching the scheme, and I fancy I can see in it a good chance of reunion." Mr. Warren adds: "I must do a little for the Wheeler Fund."

H. PERCY WARD.—Pleased to hear you are getting fairly established at Birmingham.

W. SIMONS.—Your lecture-notice arrived on Wednesday last week. They should reach us by Tuesday morning at the latest.

LINCOLN FREETHINKER.—The late Professor Henry Drummond was speaking as a professional Christian when he said that "the partial, and then the total, eclipse of virtue always follows the abandonment of belief in a personal God." He was paid to say that sort of thing. It is great nonsense.

HOBACE suggests that certain victims are going to heaven, for does not Holy Writ say that "They shall cry aloud, Hooley! Hooley! Hooley! night and day without ceasing"?

"GEORGE," 20 Rhodeswell-road, Poplar, E., has the *Freethinker* for 1882-6 inclusive, with Christmas and summer numbers, complete, excepting Nos. 76 to 82 and 138. Unbound, fair condition. They are for disposal, and the proceeds will be given to the cause.

J. ROSS, Liverpool, sends applications for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, on behalf of himself and four others—namely, T. Pruett, George Allan, Thomas Harrison, and John Howard. Other applications will follow in the course of the month. Certificates in all cases will be duly forwarded after the next Board meeting, which takes place in a few days.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Sydney A. Gimson, £1; J. Fish and W. Todd, 10s.

W. FRASER.—Mr. Andrew Lang's new book on *The Making of Religion* is in opposition to the evolutionary school of Herbert Spencer. It is well written and clever, but not convincing. We hope to review it shortly.

J. FISH.—Have we done right? If not, please advise us. Mr. Foote will try to offer Chester a date in October.

E. G. JAMES.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Sydney Bulletin—Boston Investigator—New Century Review—Bonnie Scotland's Resorts—Liberator—New Century—Ethical World—Freidenker—Isle of Man Times—Tit-Bits—Freedom—Springburn Advertiser—Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Midland Evening News—Crescent—Secular Thought—Truthseeker.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

SPECIAL.

I VENTURE to press the "*Freethinker* Circulation Fund" a little more strongly on the attention of the friends of this journal, both at home and in distant parts of the world—for it goes to almost every part of the globe that the Post Office reaches. I have kept this flag flying for sixteen years, amidst trouble, danger, and many vicissitudes. There is no fear of its being hauled down, and as little fear now of its being shot away. But it is always more or less a matter of difficulty to maintain Freethought journals. I have seen many come and go in my time. Unfortunately, a large number of Freethinkers do not buy them. They get saved from superstition themselves, and are careless about the duty of saving others; or they get so absorbed in political and social movements that they lose sight of "the good old cause." There are other hindrances, too numerous to recite. Besides, explanations do not remove difficulties. What I want my friends to do is to help me to push forward the circulation of the *Freethinker* by regular judicious advertising, which I propose to commence the first week in September, and to assist me in upholding the paper at its present level until the improved circulation renders further aid unnecessary. Only once before in the history of this journal have I ever asked for such help. I ask for it now because it is wanted again. I am not a capitalist, bloated or otherwise. No man can be who gives his life to Freethought. Time, energy, devotion, and whatever ability I possess—these I have always taxed to the utmost. I cannot possibly tax them more, but I may make them go further by attending a little to the *commercial* side of the *Freethinker*. Will my friends enable me to do this? I feel certain that the coming winter season will pretty well suffice for the effort I have in view. That is to say, if I am reasonably supported. And considering the amount of gratuitous work I have done, and am still doing, for the Secular cause, I do not think I am exactly *begging* when I make this appeal. G. W. FOOTE.

(28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.)

SUGAR PLUMS.

SUNDAY'S weather was not favorable to open-air meetings in London. There was to have been a Freethought Demonstration in Hyde Park in the afternoon, but the rain came down steadily until five o'clock, an hour and a half after the gathering was announced to take place. Mr. Watts, who was to have been one of the speakers, came to Mr. Foote's house for an early dinner, his own residence being so distant that he would otherwise have had to attend the meeting late or starving. Mournful looks were directed towards the window during the mealtime. The sky was in a steady ill-temper, and the weather grew positively worse just as Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts should have started. Nothing was to be done, therefore, but to give it up as a bad job, as an audience was not to be expected in a shower-bath. It is to be hoped that the weather will be more propitious to-day (August 14), when *two* open-air Demonstrations are arranged to take place—in the morning at Clerkenwell Green, and in the afternoon at Regent's Park. Messrs. Foote and Watts will speak from a brake kindly supplied by Mr. Wilson at both places. Messrs. Snell and Forder also speak in the morning, and Messrs. Cohen and Heaford in the afternoon.

The Sunday evening lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, will be resumed next Sunday (August 21). Mr. Foote will occupy the platform and deliver the first of a special course of lectures, which will be duly announced in our next issue.

The Camberwell Secular Hall re-opens on Sunday evening, August 21, when Mr. Charles Watts will occupy the platform.

The New York *Truthseeker* says that "Mr. Watts's many friends in this country will be glad to know that he is in good health, and hard at work in the Secular field. He hopes to come over here again, and we are certain his friends will be glad to see him."

Mr. Edward Truelove is the oldest of the National Secular Society's vice-presidents, being in his eighty-ninth year. The last time we saw him was at the South-place Institute meeting to protest against the Bedfordshire prosecution. He was obviously unfit to be out by himself, but he said he "felt that he must come." Mr. Truelove has been a bold

and brave reformer all his life. He worked with Watson, Hetherington, Southwell, Cleave, and others who championed the freedom of the press in the bad old days of oppression. He was himself imprisoned for publishing a very sober pamphlet on the population question by Robert Dale Owen, who had been an Ambassador of the United States. Of course the infirmities of old age are creeping over our veteran friend, and it appears that he now needs the constant attendance of a nurse. His daughter's increasing blindness renders her service inadequate. In the circumstances, it has been thought advisable to solicit help from those who know something of Mr. Truelove's career. A Truelove Aid Committee has been formed, consisting at present of Messrs. G. J. Holyoake, Alfred Marsh, George Anderson, George Howell, and R. Applegarth. The Treasurer *pro tem.* is Alfred Marsh, 62 Pentonville-road, London, N., to whom subscriptions should be forwarded. According to the circular, immediate help is most necessary, and surely it will be forthcoming.

The first General Members' Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, must be held within four months of the date of incorporation—that is to say, before the end of September; and it is highly desirable, from every point of view, that a good number of members should be enrolled by then. A fair number have joined already, but that number should be at least doubled. We earnestly appeal to Freethinkers in this matter. The new instrument of Secular organisation ought to be taken in hand and operated with vigor and enthusiasm. Next month we shall return to the matter of *donations*, which we prefer to let rest during the holiday time. But in the meanwhile the great thing is to get *members*. The entrance fee is 10s. for the first year, and 5s. a year afterwards. There are scores, nay hundreds, who can afford to pay such a subscription immediately. Let them do so, and participate in the election of the Board of Directors, who will conduct the Society's affairs during the ensuing twelve months.

"The Secular Society, Limited, is making slow but solid progress. It should transform the outlook for Rationalism. Hitherto it was all but impossible for friends to set apart a portion of their estate in behalf of the movement. Now all this is changed. The Secular Society is a legally incorporated body, and bequests in its favor will be secure against the machinations of ecclesiastical bigots. Mr. G. W. Foote, who is responsible for the launching of the scheme, has succeeded where others have failed, and we very heartily offer him our congratulations."—*Literary Guide*.

Mr. Avory applied on Tuesday morning for a writ of certiorari to remove the Bedborough trial from the Old Bailey to the Court of Queen's Bench. Justices Kennedy and Matthew refused the application. The trial will therefore take place at the Old Bailey in September.

The Free Press Defence Committee has arranged for another public meeting to protest against the Bedborough prosecution. It will take place on Monday evening (August 15) in the French Salon, St. James's Hall, the entrance to which is from the Restaurant in Piccadilly. The chair will be taken at eight o'clock, and the admission is free. Mr. Foote will be one of the speakers. We would gladly announce other names if they had been supplied to us.

Since the above paragraph was in type we have been informed that Mr. Frank Harris, editor of the *Saturday Review*, has consented to take the chair at the St. James's Hall meeting on Monday.

The Sheffield Secular Society takes an excursion to-day (August 14). Members and friends meet in front of the Midland Station at 1.40 to go by train at 1.55 to Rotherham, for New Park and Museum, and from there to Mr. Brooker's, Harold Croft, Greathro', at 5 for tea, etc.

The East London Branch goes on excursion by brakes to Harlow on Sunday, August 21, starting from Mile-end Waste at 8.30. Tickets, 3s. each, can be obtained at the Mile-end, Limehouse, and Victoria-park lecture stations; also from J. F. Haynes, 212 Mile-end-road, and J. Neate, 385, Bethnal-green-road.

Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* (Melbourne) for July 2 is just to hand. Our old friend was always a brave man, and he seems to need all his courage at present. Owing to the bad times, a great many Freethinkers have left Melbourne. Mr. Symes says he has lost scores of friends in this way during the last six or seven months. "No rich Freethinker," he says, "seems disposed to help me in my struggle, and I must get on as I am able. Indeed, rich and well-to-do Freethinkers—and there are plenty of them—might help me immensely without injury to themselves or friends. But, while I am expending my life in their own cause, they are too careless to do their duty, or too selfish to assist." We are sorry to hear this, and hope there will soon be a change for the better.

AN EXPLANATION.

IN last week's *Freethinker* the editor penned a brief critical note upon my article on "Atheism and Agnosticism" which appears in the current number of the *Literary Guide*. Unfortunately the article is not printed exactly as it was written. I regret that several words which were intended to explain my object in writing were inadvertently omitted. The consequence is that, upon one important point, my meaning seems rather obscure. It was my intention, while not objecting to the use of either term, to state what is supposed by some persons to be the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism. I quite agree with Mr. Foote's remark that, "as a matter of fact, Agnosticism is as much as Atheism an attitude of practical dissent from Theism."

It is true I know of no *prominent* Atheist of the present day who plainly denies the existence of God, although I frequently meet with comparatively unknown Atheists throughout the country who openly avow their denial of the existence of such a being. Many years ago Mr. Charles Southwell, who was then the popular representative of Atheism, boldly denied that any God existed. He wrote a pamphlet curiously entitled *The Impossibility of Atheism*. His "argument" was that Atheism meant the denial of the existence of any God; but, as there was no God to deny, Atheism was therefore impossible. Mr. George Jacob Holyoake very appropriately termed Southwell's pamphlet "A Fourpenny Wilderness." Personally, I have, ever since I accepted the Atheistic position, regarded it to be equally dogmatic either to affirm or to deny that of which we know nothing. So far as I am aware, no knowledge exists of what is called God, and therefore the Agnostic position upon the subject seems to me to be a rational one.

I thank Mr. Foote for giving me an opportunity of making myself clear upon this point. Like himself, I am a pronounced Atheist—that is, I have no belief in the existence of any "God"; I am an Agnostic—that is, I know nothing of the alleged supernatural, or of a future life. Further, I am a Secularist—that is, I believe in making the best physically, morally, and intellectually of what is known, leaving conjectures as to the unknown to those imaginative individuals who prefer to indulge in speculations rather than in the realities of life. These are the views which I have held for over forty years, and the longer I live the more convinced I become that they have truth for their basis and usefulness for their recommendation.

CHARLES WATTS.

MILTON'S PLEA FOR LIBERTY.

LIBERTY was not utterly unknown in England before the age of Milton. Not only was it frequently claimed by Wicklif and his followers in religion, and by the popular party in rebellion after rebellion against royal and aristocratic tyranny, but the House of Commons itself, notwithstanding the restricted suffrage and the high-handed methods of Feudalism, was always a citadel of freedom, as far as it was then capable of being understood. During the reign of the Tudors English liberty was at a low ebb; yet there was great intellectual movement in that fateful period, and the seeds were then sown of the epoch-marking revolution of the seventeenth century, which saw the beginning of all the liberties we now enjoy. From the moment the Long Parliament met, the fate of kingcraft and priestcraft was sealed. Religion itself was, it is true, only tentatively and hesitatingly discussed by a few bold spirits; but the principle of authority was everywhere challenged, and in that principle lay the secret strength of every form of despotism. There could not be a fitter moment for a vindication of liberty, not in the style of apology, but in the lofty manner of a prophet. Fortunately, the hour had found its man. The greatest genius in England, he who is reckoned with Shakespeare a twin pillar of the mighty temple of English poetry, sprang to fulfil the task. What could be better than that the noblest of causes should be championed by the noblest of men? Milton's *Areopagitica* was the first set defence of liberty in our English tongue, and, although it has been supplemented, it can never be superseded. It is a splendid arsenal from which whole generations of the soldiers of freedom have

selected their choicest weapons; Damascene blades of rhetoric that flash gloriously as they cut and parry, exquisitely fashioned stilettos of sarcasm for close thrusts, superb long-range rifles of argument, and mighty artillery of sonorous and majestic eloquence.

Old Henry More, the Platonist, who wrote many a bulky volume himself, described his own time with disgust as "this scripturient age." The sneer is common, and it always comes from the greatest sinners. Carlyle expressed a wish that the tongues of one whole generation might be cut out, and all printing suspended, to give an age "run to tongue" an opportunity of digesting its knowledge in silence. Yet the Sage of Chelsea himself, in less splenetic moments, when the hag Dyspepsia relaxed her hold upon him, allowed that "of the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful, and worthy are the things called Books,"* and that the noble art of printing "is like an infinitely intensified organ of speech, whereby the voice of a small transitory man may reach not only through all earthly space, but through all earthly time."† Ephemeral literature may be superabundant, but every good thing has its price. How many ephemeral lives are there for one immortal? How many myriad miles of flats and bogs and swamps for a Mont Blanc or a Chimborazo? Why complain, then, if a myriad commonplace men scribble for every man of genius? It is Nature's method. Enough that the better *does* exist! The trashy books, like the trashy lives, pass and perish; but a good book, as Milton finely says, "is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up to a life beyond life."

Yet all books were once treated as interlopers, or like foreigners in a despotic country. They had to carry a passport, and conform to the most rigorous conditions on pain of capital punishment, without a trial by judge and jury. Church and State looked upon them as the chiefs of a black tribe might look upon a casual white man straying in Central Africa. They were to be closely watched, if not suppressed, and care was to be taken that they did not multiply. They only existed on sufferance, and the men who wrote them were regarded as pestilent busybodies or imps of Satan, born disturbers of the peace, and natural enemies of "the powers that be." While custom kept men placid it was easy to govern them, but who could rule them when they were set thinking? It was like sailing a ship in the Maelstrom.

As the venerable and sagacious Blackstone tells us in his *Commentaries* :—

"In England, as in other countries, the art of printing, soon after its introduction, was looked upon as merely a matter of State, and subject to the coercion of the Crown. It was therefore regulated with us by the King's proclamations, prohibitions, charters of privilege, and of licence, and finally by the decrees of the Court of Star Chamber, which limited the number of printers and of presses which each should employ, and prohibited new publications unless previously approved by proper licensers."

Henry VIII., as head of the Church as well as the State, assumed absolute control over all printing, both lay and ecclesiastic. Letters Patent were at first granted for the exclusive right of printing the Bible, and to this day the Authorised Version is only issued by the Queen's printers. In the reign of Mary (1555) the Stationers' Company was established, with a monopoly of printing presses, but subject to the regulations of the Star Chamber. The number of men and presses was strictly limited, and nothing was to be printed without the licenser's approval. In 1585 the Star Chamber restricted all presses to London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and undertook to examine all manuscripts that were candidates for publication. Archbishop Laud is said to have instigated the first establishment of regular licensers, a trick of tyranny borrowed from the Inquisition. According to the decree of the Star Chamber in 1637, all books were to be examined before being entered with the Stationers' Company, by some of the following officials: the Lord Chief Baron or one of the Chief Justices for law, the principal Secretaries of State for history and politics, and the Archbishop of Canterbury (that is, the noble Laud himself) for divinity, physics, philosophy, and poetry. The number of master printers was limited to twenty, and of printing presses to forty;

* *Lectures on Heroes*, v.

† *Essays on Early German Literature*.

and restrictions were put upon type-founding. Laud was evidently resolved that the flock God had given him should not suffer from book-headache.

Laud being settled, and the Star Chamber itself abolished, the English press burst into the most exuberant freedom. The licensers were disregarded, the Stationers' Company treated with disdain, and illicit publishers openly put their imprint on works that stooped to no tribunal but the public. Among these were Milton's two *Tractates on Divorce*, which roused the ire of the Westminster Assembly, who named him in a batch of eleven "sectaries and heretics." On August 13, 1644, Mr. Herbert Palmer, preaching to the two Houses of Parliament, denounced Milton's second *Tractate* as "a wicked book abroad and uncensored, though deserving to be burnt." Following this, the Stationers' Company, egged on by the Presbyterian divines, petitioned the House of Commons to put a stop to such flagrant violations of the law, and of their trade privileges, as were involved in the wholesale circulation of unlicensed books. Milton was particularly mentioned as a peccant author. The House referred the matter to the Committee of Printing, and they judiciously let Milton alone.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

NOTES ON CHRISTIANITY, THE CHURCH, AND SLAVERY.

(Concluded from page 507.)

BUT how did Christians treat their slaves? An English gentleman and a Christian,* travelling in America during 1855, though anxious to prove that many of the stories of cruelty on the part of the slaveholders were false, is, nevertheless, forced to admit that in a good many instances the slaves were subject to the utmost cruelty. He says: "I must, however, state that, in speaking of the sufferings or injuries to which the slave is liable, I am not proclaiming them merely on the authority of the northern abolitionist, or on the deductions which I have drawn from human nature; many travellers have made similar charges." Miss Bremer writes: "I beheld the old slave hunted to death because he dared to visit his wife—beheld him mangled, beaten, recaptured, fling himself into the water of the Black River, over which he was retaken into the power of his hard master—and the law was silent. I beheld a young woman struck, for a hasty word, upon the temples, so that she fell down dead—and the law was silent. I heard the law through its jury adjudicate between a white man and a black, and sentence the latter to be flogged, when the former was guilty—and they who were honest among the jurymen in vain opposed the verdict. I beheld here, on the shores of the Mississippi only a few months ago, a young negro girl fly from the maltreatment of her master—and he was a professor of religion—and fling herself into the river" (*Homes of the New World*).

The same writer gives another instance of a lady of New Orleans who was accustomed to strip and flog a slave for the pleasure of witnessing sufferings which she endeavored to make more acute by rubbing soft soap into the broken skin. Where, let me ask, can such diabolical cruelty be equalled, let alone surpassed? This was in a Christian country, whose Christianity, it is said, abolished slavery. And there was even Biblical authority for such cruelty; for, according to the Old Testament, although a slaveholder was to be punished for instant murder of a slave, he was not to be punished for torturing and slowly murdering his slave. "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished; notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." Many Christians, I know, frown at this horrible passage; but, all the same, it is there in black and white between the covers of God's most holy book.

It is impossible for any pen to transmit to paper anything like a correct description of the horrors and cruelties of the Christian slave-trade in Africa and America. The greatest sinners were Christians. The largest dealers in human flesh and blood were Christians.

Thomas Fowell Buxton, in his book on *The African Slave*

* Hon. H. A. Murray, *Lands of the Free and the Slave*, vol. ii., p. 222.

Trade, in summing up the extent of the trade says: "It is of material importance that the reader, for the purpose of following the argument, should now fix and ascertain the number which seems to him the reasonable and moderate result from the facts and figures which have been produced. To me it seems just to take annually:—For the Christian Slave Trade, 150,000; for the Mohammedan Slave Trade, 50,000; total, 200,000."

Bruce, describing the slave-hunting expeditions in Abyssinia, says: "The grown-up men are all killed, and are then mutilated, parts of their bodies being always carried away as trophies. Several of the old mothers are also killed, while others, frantic with fear and despair, kill themselves. The boys and girls of a more tender age are then carried off in brutal triumph."

T. F. Buxton gives page after page of the most revolting cruelties inflicted by Christian slave-holders upon the poor negroes.

Captain Hayes, R.N., mentions the case of a slaver having a large cargo of human beings chained together. "The master of the vessel, with more humanity than his fellows, permitted some of them to come on deck (but still chained together) for the benefit of the air, when they immediately commenced jumping overboard hand in hand, and drowning in couples." He explains the cause of this circumstance by saying: "They were just brought from a situation between the decks, and to which they knew they must return, where the scalding perspiration was running from one to the other, covered also with their own filth, and where it was no uncommon occurrence for women to be bringing forth children, and men dying by the side, with full in their view living and dead bodies chained together, and the living, in addition to all their torments, laboring under the most famishing thirst, being in very few instances allowed more than a pint of water a day." He goes on to say: "I have now an officer on board the *Dryad* who, on examining one of the slave vessels, found not only living men chained to dead bodies, but the latter in a putrid state; and we have now a case which, if true, is too horrible and disgusting to be described."*

Allison, in his *History of Europe*, says†: "Such are the sufferings of the poor wretches crammed into these holes, where they are for days and weeks enduring the agonies of suffocation, that they are sometimes driven by the madness induced by suffering into revolt; but in such cases the arms and discipline of the Europeans generally prevail, and, after forty or fifty have been massacred, the rest are flogged in so merciless a manner that death would be a relief to their prolonged sufferings."

"Those who were thus executed were heavily ironed; a rope was then put round their necks, which was rove through the yard arm, and they were run up from the deck. By this means they were not hanged, they were strangled or choked, and in that state, while still alive, they were run up in the same manner, until their legs were laid across the rail of the bulwark on the ship's side, and then they were broken and chopped off to save the irons. In this way the bleeding body of a negro was thrown overboard to make way for another. The legs of about a dozen were chopped off in that manner. When the bleeding feet fell on the deck, they were picked up by the Brazilian crew, and then thrown overboard after the body; sometimes they pelted the body with them in sport, while it hung half alive. The women were shot in the neck, and thrown over while still living. Several of them were seen to struggle in the water some time before they sunk. After the slaughter was done, about twenty were brought up and flogged. The women were flogged as well as the men. Such was the severity of the flogging they received that they were obliged to lie on their bellies during the remainder of the voyage, and on the backs of some the flesh had putrefied and fallen off in pieces of six or eight inches in diameter."‡

And all this taking place, remember, after eighteen centuries of Christianity. If the genius of Christianity is so opposed to the institution of slavery, how is it that after eighteen centuries slavery was not only not abolished, but that the most diabolical and unspeakable cruelties formed part of this nefarious trade under the shadow of the cross?

Such, O Christian, is what your religion has done for slavery. You tell us that Jesus Christ is living to-day, that

he is in heaven, equal to God Almighty in wisdom, power, and love. Can you believe this in face of these awful facts, in face of this diabolical trade carried on in his name, with his blessing invoked upon it? Where was Jesus Christ while all this was going on? Are we to believe that he knew all this, and that, having the power to stop it, did not, but looked on and allowed it? Are we to believe that the savior of men, who *could* save, did not? Doth God care for oxen? asked Paul. Doth God care for slaves? Apparently not. I cannot believe that God Almighty died to save these men's souls, and left their bodies to the care of inhuman, hard-hearted monsters. I can see no fatherly love in that. I cannot believe that such a God would stand by in silence while husbands were torn from wives, sisters from brothers, and children from their mothers' breasts; to be packed away in the hold of a slave ship bearing his name, having his professed followers in command; torn from their native land by selfish, mercenary traders to toil among the dreary rice swamps of Carolina, or the lonely sugar plantations of Alabama.

It was not man's Christianity, but his humanity, that abolished slavery.

What has Jesus Christ or his gospel done for the slave? It was on earth the cry of the slave was heard, not in heaven. From man came salvation, not from God.

The Rev. Calvin Fairbanks was a Christian and a man. He received for his work in the cause of abolition seventeen years in gaol and 37,000 lashes from his fellow Christians. The following scene—described in his own words—took place in a Christian State. "Early in May, 1834," he says, "my sympathy and patriotism were roused on behalf of one of the most beautiful and exquisite young girls, only one-sixty-fourth African. She was self-educated and accomplished, and her jealous mistress doomed her to be sold, hating her for her beauty and accomplishments. There were two thousand people at the sale, representing the wealth and culture of America. A short, thick-necked, black-eyed Frenchman from New Orleans was determined to secure her. Upon the block stood the auctioneer by his victim, who seemed ready to drop to the earth. He directed attention to her excellent qualities as a mistress for any gentleman. This he kept prominent in the vilest manner, outraging all decency. Bids began at \$250, and ran up to \$1,400. The Frenchman from New Orleans alone bid against me. I bid \$1,450. My contestant stood silent. The hammer trembled, lowered, rose, fell, and the fiend flushed, and quick as thought dropped his hammer. 'Look here, gentlemen! who is going to lose such a chance as this? Here is a girl fit to be the mistress of a king!' A suppressed cry of shame rose through that throng. Southern women blushed. Bids rose to \$1,475. There was again a lull. Then the auctioneer turned his victim's profile to that excited crowd.....exclaiming, 'Ah, gentlemen, who is going to be the owner of this prize? Whoso is the next bid?' The Frenchman bid \$1,480. The hammer rose high, quivered, lowered; Eliza gave me an appealing look. 'Are you all done? Once, twice, do I hear no more, three'; and the hammer quivered as the Frenchman's face flushed with triumph; three, and the hammer fell down. 'Fourteen hundred and eighty-five!' The Frenchman turned away. The hammer fell; she was mine. She fainted. 'You've got her d—d cheap, sir. What are you going to do with her?' 'Free her, sir!' I cried."

Now, where was Jesus Christ while this was going on? "Oh," replies the Christian, "Jesus Christ put it into the heart of his minister to buy her and free her." Did he? But what would have become of her had he not been there? For all Jesus Christ would have done, sold into shame and slavery. But he *was* there in the person of the Rev. Calvin Fairbanks. In this case, it is true, she was saved; but this was no isolated case. In hundreds of instances there was no savior there, and the poor victims were sold with prayers upon their lips; prayers to a God powerless to hear them, a Savior powerless to save.

But it may be asked, What does all this prove? Why refer to this awful chapter in the history of Christendom? We answer, Because Christianity is extolled as the great enemy of slavery and of tyranny of all kinds; whereas the facts referred to here show conclusively that Christianity, unless humanised, is the reverse of what its paid exponents claim. The history of slavery proves this religion to have been the supporter of tyranny, the abettor of immorality, the opponent of learning, and the enemy of humanity.

W. WITT LEAVIS.

* Page 155. † *History of Europe*, vol. iv., p. 71.

‡ Account of the treatment of the slaves on board Lenordi Fonseca's ship; quoted by Allison. †

BOOK CHAT.

LET our readers who wish to have a clear idea of the secular progress made during the last hundred years read *The Wonderful Century*, by Alfred Russel Wallace (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.). The advance of civilisation since 1800 has been tremendous. It is not enough, Mr. Wallace assures us, merely to say that our century is superior to any that have gone before it, for it possesses a record of progress which will bear comparison with that of the whole preceding period of human history. In order to justify this sweeping assertion, he first gives a sketch of the practical inventions and the theoretical discoveries of science which have made the present century memorable, and then proceeds to compare them with those of preceding ages. Here is his list of the thirteen inventions and practical applications of science which have, in so many respects, changed the outward forms of our civilisation since the century began:—Railways, steam navigation, electric telegraphs, the telephone, friction matches, gas lighting, electric lighting, photography, the phonograph, the Röntgen rays, spectrum analysis, which so greatly extends our knowledge of the universe; and, finally, the use of anæsthetics and antiseptics, which render the most severe surgical operations painless, and so extend the means of saving life. It is a splendid record, and one which could be easily extended by including other inventions of minor importance. But it is sufficient for the author's purpose, and against it in all preceding time there were, he points out, only seven inventions of the first rank—the telescope, the printing-press, the mariner's compass, Arabic numerals, alphabetical writing, the steam-engine, and the barometer. *The Wonderful Century* is a book for everybody to read, and is worthy of the reputation of the distinguished traveller and naturalist, the co-discoverer with Darwin of the theory of development by natural selection.

* * *

Before quitting this very remarkable book we wish to draw particular attention to Mr. Wallace's chapters on "Vaccination a Delusion: its Penal Enforcement a Crime," in which he smites the vaccination party hip and thigh, and speaks of their pestiferous work as causing "one of the foulest blots on the civilisation of the nineteenth century."

* * *

The French have a laudable habit of naming their streets after their distinguished men and women. It is pleasant to find that we are doing the same in England. In Leyton, for instance, we find roads named after Huxley, Faraday, and Murchison.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MORAL INSTRUCTION AND THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is unfortunate that Mr. Cohen does not see eye to eye with the Moral Instruction League as regards the use of the Bible. Mr. Cohen's chief concern is to exclude the Bible from the schools. The Moral Instruction League's chief concern is to introduce Moral Instruction. Mr. Cohen objects that the Moral Instruction League refrains from attacking the Bible. It was not constituted for that purpose. The Moral Instruction League does not propose to "teach the Bible" free from all supernatural sanctions. They take the position that the Bible may be used equally with other books as an aid to the teacher for the teaching of morality. The way in which this may be done without supernatural or theological implications is shown in Dr. Adler's *Moral Instruction for Children*. If, after systematic Moral Instruction were instituted in the schools, teachers were to use the Bible for imparting supernaturalism and theology, there would be no more determined opponents than the Moral Instruction League. In the meantime, it is found that we may move more rapidly if we travel on the lines of evolution rather than revolution. Mr. Cohen may rely on it that, if the object of the League is not sudden death to the Bible as he would wish, it is certain death in the long run. There will be so many and much better books for teaching morality. Meanwhile, why should we raise unnecessary opposition? It is more important to get systematic Moral Instruction into the schools than to get the Bible out, and if the former is attained the latter will be much easier.

It should be remembered that the object of the League is not to get the Bible out of the schools, and it is unreasonable to quibble because they do not attempt it. It is as if the supporters of Anti-vivisection and Prevention of Cruelty Societies should be taunted because they do not help to put down a more widespread form of cruelty and become vegetarians. They and the Moral Instruction League do a useful work as far as they go, and each has a well-defined and well-

directed purpose. I cannot avoid the impression that Mr. Cohen evolves out of his own imagination all sorts of fanciful notions about the League because they prefer to concede liberty in the restricted use of the Bible. There is no ground for assuming that they have "fervent admiration, veneration, and affection" for the Bible, and wish to retain it.

THOMAS ADAMS.

MR. JUSTICE DAY'S SENTENCES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Justice Day—a notoriously severe judge, and our greatest flogger—has made another speech lamenting that the Legislature does not give him more elbow-room in the matter of punishments. In sentencing a prisoner at York Summer Assizes for a criminal offence on a young girl, he said there would be a speedy disappearance of such offences if the Judge had power to order a flogging, and so forth.

As far as I have observed, Mr. Justice Day's sentences of imprisonment or penal servitude are quite as severe as those of the average judge, and, where he can, he adds the flogging which such men as Sir Henry Hawkins omits. I think Mr. Justice Day should be called on to give a statement of the sentences passed by him which included flogging, with the crimes of which the prisoners were convicted, and let the public see whether his sentences are really deterrent, or more efficacious than the sentences of less severe judges who do not flog criminals.

Note should also be taken of the Home Secretary's omission to remit floggings in cases where he knows well that no other judge on the Bench would have passed the sentence.

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

CHRISTIAN HYÆNAS.

PRIESTS seldom appear so disgusting as when acting as hyænas over the dead bodies of their opponents. There seems too good reason to believe that Sir Richard Burton was smuggled into the great lying Church at the last moment, at a time when he was unconscious. It may be pleaded in excuse that his wife was anxious for the welfare of his soul; but the spectacle of a Christian hyæna administering the Last Sacraments to the unconscious man who had fought against his Church in the full strength of his manhood is none the less odious.

The priests did the same thing with Prince Jerome Napoleon. Prince Napoleon was all his life an anti-clerical in politics, and a Freethinker in religion. The priest, of course, gave out that at the time the Prince was in full possession of his faculties. We prefer to rely upon the repeated rejection of the services of the priests by the Prince during his illness. According to the priest, the Prince said that he died adhering to the principles of the Concordat—i.e., the Concordat of Napoleon I, under which Catholicism was restored as a national faith. Further, that he was imbued with the religious sentiments of the Bonapartes—that is, with the sentiment that religion is a cheap and effective police service in the interests of the governing classes. Further still, the Prince declared that he inclined towards the doctrine of Rousseau—the same Rousseau whose books were solemnly condemned by the Archbishop of Paris. The Church has no room for the disciples of Rousseau in their lifetime, and it is grimly farcical to lay hold of them *in articulo mortis*. It is such death-bed scenes as those of Sir Richard Burton and Prince Jerome Napoleon which keep alive the irreconcilable enmity of Freethinkers to clericalism.

MIMNERMUS.

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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.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. Heaford, "Common Sense v. Religion."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, R. P. Edwards; 6.30, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Protestant Persecution." Peckham Rye: E. Pack—3.15, "The Futility and Evil of Prayer"; 6.30, "Where's yer Mor'l Code?"

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, Freethought Demonstration, Messrs. Foote, Watts, Snell, and R. Forder.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, C. Cohen; 7, W. Heaford. August 17, at 8, C. Cohen.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7, Mr. Davis.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lucretius Keen—11.30, "Why Christians were Persecuted"; 3.30, "Inspiration of the Bible."

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards, "Stroll through the British Museum."

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack. August 16, at 8, C. Cohen.

REGENT'S PARK: 3.30, Freethought Demonstration, Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, and Heaford.

COUNTRY.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SCHOOL (Pole-lane): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner—2.30, "The Aim of Life"; 6.30, "School-taught Morality."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—August 14, e., Bethnal Green; 16, Limehouse; 17, Mile End Waste.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 14, m., Finsbury; 21, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 28, m., Wood Green. September 4, m., Mile End; 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—September 11 and 18, Manchester.

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