

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

Regard not who it is which speaketh, but weigh only what is spoken.—HOOKER.

The Repaganisation of Rome.

THE following Reuter telegram appeared in Monday morning's newspapers:—

"Rome, July 11.

"The Municipal Council yesterday decided by 57 votes to 3 to abolish all religious teaching in elementary schools."

This is a wonderfully fine piece of news. The triumph of Secular Education at Rome will cheer the hearts of Freethinkers in every part of the world. Men and women will read of it in Europe, in America, in Africa, in Australia—and even in India, in China, and in Japan—and rejoice over another great step towards the intellectual emancipation of the human race. For the Eternal City is not as other cities. The first name in the world is Rome. It has a magic of its own. It was the centre of the mightiest Empire in all history. It was afterwards the centre of the mightiest Church on earth. It is at the very heart of Christendom, in the very citadel of superstition, that reason has won this signal victory.

Four years ago I was present at the International Freethought Congress in Rome. It was a magnificent gathering of representative Freethinkers from all parts of the globe. It was a demonstration that Freethought is as international as Christianity. It was a challenge to the Christian religion at the highest seat of its authority.

The Pope denounced that Congress as an outrage. He called upon the Italian government, he called upon the whole civilised world, to note how grossly he was insulted. Rome was his city; it belonged to him as the head of the Holy Catholic Church. Its invasion by thousands of "infidels" was an act of sacrilege. He could not repel the invasion, but he could do something. He sulked in the Vatican. He closed that historic building for several days. By this means he prevented the Freethinkers from viewing the treasures of art there; which are mostly legacies from the higher civilisation which Christianity destroyed.

The Italian government welcomed the Congress and lent it a fine public building for its sittings. That was all the notice taken of the Pope's hysterics. And now, after the lapse of a few years, the Municipal Council of Rome, by a majority so overwhelming as to be practically unanimous, has resolved to sweep religion out of the public schools. It is splendid.

How the whirligig of time brings in its revenges! So said the greatest of men, in whose plays resound the footsteps and the voices of the masters of the world; the steady tramp of Roman legions, the grand accents of Roman orators, the imperial tones of Roman statesmen. All the glory that was Rome is now visibly represented by colossal and astonishing ruins which enable the spectator to form a conception of the superiority of those who "reigned

before religion made men mad." Pagan Rome was succeeded by Christian Rome. A total and disgraceful change came over the scene. The vast and fascinating city dwindled into a narrow home of filth and misery. And no less complete was the intellectual change. The city that never had a law against freedom of thought became the haunt of bigotry and fanaticism. The city of philosophers became the city of priests. But another change is now taking place, and philosophy is reasserting itself in the paganism of Rome.

Two hundred and seventy-five years ago—it was on June 22, 1633—Galileo was led before his judges and a large assembly of cardinals and prelates to listen to his condemnation and sentence by the Holy Congregation of Rome. His crime was teaching that the earth went round the sun. This was declared to be a damnable heresy. He was committed to prison for an indeterminate period. Before going off to his doom he was forced on his knees and compelled to recant his abominable opinions. He was a feeble old man, and he denied what he knew was the truth. He affirmed that the earth did *not* move. Yet it is said that as he rose from his knees he muttered between his teeth, "And yet it *does* move." Yes, it does move; and the Pope and all His Holiness's friends cannot stop it from going round—or themselves from going round with it. Neither can they arrest the movement of the intellectual world. Witness this resolution of the Roman Municipal Council.

Some years before Galileo expiated the crime of thinking, a still darker scene of superstition was enacted at Rome. It was on February 17, 1600. After seven years of solitary imprisonment, Giordano Bruno was burnt to death on the Field of Flowers. He died the most desolate of deaths. Not a friendly face looked out from the crowd of bigots who watched his agony. He stood alone against the world, on the unshakable rock of his own manhood, and thus became the sublimest martyr of all time. A generation ago he was vindicated by the thinkers of Europe, who erected a monument to his memory on the very spot where he was butchered. And now within an easy walk of that sacred spot the representatives of Rome have banished religion altogether from the people's schools—leaving it, under the law of freedom, to fight its own battles, and sink or swim as it can.

This is what Bruno and Galileo really fought for. Theirs was a battle for freedom. They wished to think for themselves, and to allow everyone else the same right. They believed that the truth would make men free—and wise and happy. They paid the penalty for their daring; the one in imprisonment and perhaps torture, the other in the Gethsemane of the dungeon and the Calvary of the stake. Yet both of them probably looked forward to the dawn of a better and nobler day. Bruno almost certainly did. Why else should he tell his judges, with such calm heroic pride, that they pronounced his awful sentence with far more fear than he heard it? What did he think they feared, unless it was the verdict of posterity? And is not that verdict being pronounced? Is not the glad news from Rome a foretaste of the death of that Faith whose life sprang from the death of reason and liberty?

G. W. FOOTE.

"The Arrogance of Ignorance."

IF we consult the New Testament lists of the virtues to be held in highest esteem, we shall be surprised to learn how atrociously un-Christian Christians are. Jesus is made to pronounce his benediction on spirit-poverty, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst for righteousness, peaceableness, mercifulness, and purity. Paul says that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." Peter's inventory is as follows: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, love of the brethren, love; and Peter adds that "he that lacketh these things is blind." The Christian Endeavor Topic for July 12 was entitled "Character and Courtesy," based on 1 Peter iii., 8-13; and one of the appointed writers on it refers to an old-fashioned little book called *The Guide to Etiquette: a Manual of Good Manners*, observing that, though we may smile at the elaborate rules and minute directions it contains, "a man's outward manners are really of the utmost importance, because they are so closely connected with his character." This is perfectly true. Indeed, "we may say, in the same way, that any man's behavior towards his fellows must express and reveal the man's true personality. It betrays his essential character. It proceeds out of the abundance of his heart." With this also we are in complete agreement. Peter's words are most emphatic and plain, "Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." Another writer makes the following quotation from Francis of Assisi: "Know, dearest brother, that courtesy is one of God's own properties, who sendeth his rain and his sunshine upon the just and upon the unjust, out of his great courtesy." This writer remarks that "without this courteousness of behavior the finest character is defective."

In this connection it is well to remember Ruskin's analysis of the nature of vulgarity in *Modern Painters*, which one of the writers referred to mentions. We are told that "vulgarity in its essence proceeds from blunted sensibility; that it is the token and result of a coarsened and callous heart."

Now, with the New Testament schedules of the attributes of character, as well as the foregoing observations, in mind, let us proceed to examine the behavior of Christian teachers towards those who differ from them. Their attitude to, and treatment of, unbelievers is notorious. It is not long since one of the foremost leaders of the religious world characterised Professor Haeckel as "a rude, ill-mannered, ignorant child," an "unthinking mind," whose "obvious weakness and ignorance and childish credulity" are exploited to "gull the ignorance of the public." Is that an exhibition of Christian courtesy? It is quite possible for a Christian minister to be honestly of conviction that Professor Haeckel's teaching is both false and dangerous, but to charge such a teacher with rudeness, bad manners, and ignorance is certainly to be guilty of the rankest vulgarity. Mud-throwing is never an act of courtesy, and coarse denunciation cannot be a sign of meekness or true modesty.

Sometimes Christian apologists imagine that they make a wonderful concession when they say, "We are devoutly thankful that the majority of Atheists are better than their creed." But such a concession is an insufferable insult in that it is wholly untrue. There is no Atheist on earth who is better than, or even as good as, his creed. Not one article in the Atheistic creed makes for immorality. What the Atheist provides is, not moral licence, but a rational basis for every moral action. Now think of the venomous sting which the sentence that immediately follows the concession is intended to carry: "They try to conform to a moral law, but in so doing they are illustrating their own thoughtlessness and saving their moral reputation by sacrificing their logic." The logic of Atheism shows that morality is rooted in social life, and has for its only criterion the welfare of the community. It is the force of their

own logic, the sense of what ought to and must be in order to secure the commonweal that makes Atheists moral. Dr. Nansen, in his excellent article in the current *Hibbert Journal*, tells the following anecdote in illustration of this point:—

"I once witnessed a discussion between a very prominent and intelligent clergyman and an Agnostic. The clergyman asked the Agnostic whether he did not believe in a life after death. The Agnostic answered that he did not. The clergyman said that he could not understand such a thing, and still less could he understand why the Agnostic led a moral life. If he, the clergyman, did not believe in a life and a reward after death, he could not see the purpose of a moral life, and he would certainly take all the enjoyment of its pleasures that life could give him. The Agnostic answered that he feared their tastes did not quite agree. He saw his happiness in harmony, and such a life would hardly bring harmony into his existence."

Such is Atheistic logic on the subject of ethics, and if he puts that logic into practice the Atheist is bound to be a highly and rationally moralised being. How foolish as well as false and misleading, therefore, is the assertion that "there is no place in a Godless Universe for any approach to a moral sense," and that "unless an Atheist is a fool he will cease to talk of rationalising morality." Whoever writes in that insulting style either wilfully misrepresents or is culpably ignorant of the real teaching of Atheism.

But it is not only in dealing with Secularists that Christian teachers evince such a conspicuous lack of the humility and meekness enjoined by their Lord. They are equally discourteous towards their brethren who are theologically at variance with them. A case in point occurs in "The Correspondence of the Rev. David Smith, D.D.," in the *British Weekly* for July 9. An inquirer had expressed the opinion that "the scheme of redemption as given by St. Paul in Rom. v. 12-21 is an interpretation of Christ's life and death which he himself never thought of, and can therefore claim no higher authority than that which readers of the New Testament may be disposed to accord to St. Paul." As this smacked of the New Theology, Dr. Smith could not resist the temptation to administer the castigation it so richly deserved. It is well known that the New Theology nominally lays great stress upon the teaching of Jesus, regarding his death as only a brilliant example set by a heroic martyr. To Dr. Smith this is rank heresy, and he pounces upon it with red-hot fury, and gives it no quarter. Let us watch him tearing it up into black smithereens. It is an exceedingly amusing as well as somewhat tragical spectacle. What does he oppose to the great heresy? Nothing but his own dogmatic dicta. He merely piles bald assertions one upon another without even attempting to furnish a single proof. Paul was an inspired and therefore infallible interpreter of the life and death of Jesus, and we have no alternative but to accept his interpretation as final and all-conclusive. The business of divines in all ages is simply to translate that interpretation into the language of their own day. Then comes the following comical statement:—

"If St. Paul had lived and written that profound passage which you cite in our day, I suspect he might have talked about the law of heredity, and the solidarity of the race, but his doctrine would have been precisely the same, and is it not wonderful to find him setting forth an idea which the growth of human knowledge has not discredited, but rather confirmed?"

Let us look dispassionately at Rom. v. 12-21, and see whether there is in it the slightest trace of the modern theory of heredity whether as interpreted by the Lamarckians or by the Weismanns. Science knows nothing of a first man by whose one transgression death entered into the world, nor of a second man by whose one act of obedience a whole race doomed to die may yet inherit immortality. Such is the unmistakable teaching of the "profound passage" under consideration, and nothing can be more certain than that modern science gives it the direct lie. Now, because the New Theology takes the scientific side and gives Paul the go-by on that question, Dr. Smith loses his temper and simply raves:

"I confess that I have very scant patience with the fashionable depreciation of the authority of the apostolic teaching. It is the very arrogance of ignorance." All we can say is that such language is not the language of knowledge, but rather of blind and defeated dogmatism. We should very much like to see Rom. v. 12-21 so restated as to naturally harmonise with the testimony of modern knowledge.

Now, Dr. Smith seeks refuge behind a sharp, two-edged sword. He says: "It would surely deliver us from it [the arrogance of ignorance] if we remembered the Lord's promise that after his departure he would send the Spirit of Truth to his disciples to guide them into all the truth and to glorify him by taking of his and declaring it unto them." If that is to be taken seriously, as Dr. Smith evidently intends that it should be, it involves the complete condemnation of his own Protestantism as a wicked schism from the body of Christ, and a full vindication of all the claims and deeds of the Catholic Church. If Jesus ever made that promise, and if it has been fulfilled, Christianity and Catholicism are literally identical, and Dr. Smith and his friends, in spite of all their pretensions, are Antichrists doomed to endless perdition.

Great is "the arrogance of ignorance," especially when it pours contempt upon knowledge, and tries to prevent the people from giving it their whole-hearted welcome. But we are at the dawning of the day, and night is already on the wing.

J. T. LLOYD.

Ethics and Unbelief.—I.

THE moral delinquencies of the unbeliever is an old theme with Christians. Originally it points to the fatal identification of religious beliefs with moral duties; to the belief that right religious belief is the most important thing of all, and that to be wrong in this direction is to divest of all merit the being right in others. Later it becomes a bugbear wherewith to frighten timid believers. The picture of the man whose unbelief leads to immorality, or whose immorality leads to unbelief—either aspect serves equally well—is useful in so far as it keeps a number from investigating the intellectual grounds of belief, and also from learning by personal encounter what the unbeliever is really like. Concerning the unknown, people may believe anything and fear anything; and religion gained a distinct advantage—for a time—by so depicting the unbeliever that his character alone was enough to keep folk at a distance. Just as people only longed to get into the Christian heaven because there was the Christian hell to keep out of, so many were kept in the paths of conformity because of the supposed danger of stepping outside.

This was, of course, an easy game while unbelievers were few and far between. But the difficulty of playing it increased in exact proportion to the growth of unbelief. For unbelievers strangely declined to live up to the character delineated for them by Christians. In spite of numerous manuals of ethical misdirection, written by men of unquestionable piety, telling them the crimes they *ought* to commit, they obstinately refused to fill the bill. If they were not better than Christians, they persisted in not being worse. In a sense this only added to their offence. By all rules of Christian reasoning they *ought* to have been bad; that they were not was an additional attack on the utility of Christianity. A wicked unbeliever the Christian teacher or leader would have tolerated—even loved. He could have used him as the Spartans are said to have used their drunken helots. And when the number of unbelievers so increased that Christians rubbed shoulders with them without finding themselves assaulted or their pockets picked, when they saw unbelievers behaving in all respects much as other people, the declamations concerning the relationship between immorality and unbelief began to lose force. The clergy were

in a quandary. The virtues of the unbeliever were really more objectionable than his vices.

Some new explanation had to be found for the phenomenon, and one was soon hit upon. It was admitted that Freethinkers were frequently as good as Christians (any Freethinker will, of course, feel pleased and flattered at being placed in so exalted a category); but, it was said, we must not overlook the fact that they had Christian parents; they had the advantage of living in a Christian environment, with the example of Christian character all around them; and it is these influences that have kept them respectably well-behaved, in spite of the sinister influence of their unbelief. This argument has been repeated very frequently of late years, and it was served up by Dr. Warschauer to the readers of the *Christian Commonwealth* (in the issue for July 8), with that Queen-Anne-is-dead kind of an air which that gentleman assumes when announcing, in the name of the New Theology, something that is very old.

Dr. Warschauer admits that Agnostics (it is quite laughable to see how respectable a word "Agnostic" has become) are "as conscientious, as kindly, as well-behaved as their fellow-citizens who believe in a personal God, and see His fullest revelation in Jesus Christ." As a Freethinker I feel, personally, flattered. The idea that even without a personal God or Jesus Christ I *may* become as conscientious, as kindly, and as well-conducted as a Christian fills me with thankfulness and puts my modesty to the blush. Dr. Warschauer may be surprised to learn that many Freethinkers would regard it as not being an extravagant compliment to be told they were as good as Christians, and that the truly Christian character by no means exemplifies their highest moral ideal. Still, we may take the compliment for what it is worth.

This, however, is beside the point. The real question, Dr. Warschauer tells us, is, "Are the moral excellencies of the Agnostic the product—the fruit—of Agnosticism, in the same sense in which the virtues of the Christian are the *product* of Christianity?" The reply to this is, of course, in the negative. And he adds, "the question is simply one of history. It is purely a matter of fact that our civilisation is the outcome, so far as what is best in it is concerned, of Christianity. The ethics which guide and inspire right conduct in the world as we know it are the ethics of the Gospel."

Now, one would be helped in criticising such a deliverance if one were favored with an exact description of what is meant by the ethics of the Gospel, or exactly what are the elements of our civilisation that we owe to Christianity. As the precise meaning and value of the "ethics of the Gospel" is, and always has been, subjects of dispute, it is scarcely helpful for them to be introduced in this wide and general manner. To take only one instance. It is fairly certain that the intellectual rectitude, which, if anything, is a strong characteristic of conscientious, etc., Agnostics, is *not* derived from the Gospels or from Christian teaching. Intellectual rectitude, which many—the present writer among the number—believe lies at the root of all conscious morality, has no clear place in the Gospels, and receives very scant encouragement therein. Nor has it been developed through Christian influences. The duty of careful examination, the importance of mental culture, are ignored by genuine Christian teaching. This aspect of the question is certainly "simply one of history"; and the historic testimony is that the right to exercise the ethics of the intellect has been won in the teeth of Christian influence—both that which emanates from the Gospels and that which has come from organised Christian bodies.

Dr. Warschauer evidently thinks he proves his case by quoting from Lecky and others that the source of moral development in Europe has been Christianity. But an opinion from someone else adds no real force to the statement. It is merely

another opinion, and what is wanted are the facts upon which the opinion is based. If Dr. Warschauer knows the facts he should produce them. If he does not, he is merely overcoming his readers by the influence of a name. His evident opinion that his case is strengthened by citing from non-Christian writers is quite erroneous. For against that one need only place the fact that their expressed admiration of Christianity did not prevent them disowning it, and so expressing the conviction that the world would get along very well in its absence.

That all that is best in our civilisation comes from Christianity is one of those sweeping statements that will, necessarily, command the assent of a Christian reader, because it is only an echo of his own prejudice. Others will ask, What are these elements? It will not do to cite certain things that have been associated with Christianity. That would be altogether a wrong way of putting the matter. The real way to put the question is, first, What are the essential elements of Christianity? and, second, Has Christianity ever taught anything that would not have been taught to the world had Christianity never existed? Now it is surely late in the day for anyone to claim—particularly a New Theologian—that there is anything original, in the sense of their being unknown before Christianity came, about Christian teachings or doctrines. The doctrines of Christianity are demonstrably pre-Christian. The moral precepts associated with it are, in the main, Jewish precepts, and were household property at the time given for the birth of Jesus. The Golden Rule has been as universally preached as it has been generally ignored, and ignored most of all by those who have had the impudence to set themselves up as its originators. Civilisation neither began with Christianity nor will it end with it. The elements of a civil polity, and of a jurisprudence, was provided for modern Europe by the Roman Empire. The best elements of our intellectual life are to be sought for in ancient Greece. The doctrine of a common human nature, binding all mankind together, belongs to the pagan world; nor did it appear in Christian teaching until that teaching had been brought under pagan influences. Even to-day—and Dr. Warschauer should ponder the fact—in all branches of study, except theology, students are sent to the literature that existed before Christianity appeared, and to the literature that has grown up since, but which has not the slightest essential connection with Christianity in any of its varied forms. In art, science, and literature, Christianity might be as well non-existent as existent. Its connection with either is purely accidental.

Now, surely Dr. Warschauer will not ask us to believe that the culture which gave us the literature and humanism of Greece, and the law and polity of Rome, would have remained barren and stagnant had Christianity never appeared? He will surely not ask us to believe that all conception of the value of truthfulness, honor, honesty, chastity, duty, patriotism, would have died out had there never been any Christian religion? To assume so would be to take up the position occupied by those ignorant Christian preachers who appear to believe that all good began with Christianity and will therefore end with it. And if he does not believe this, does it not necessarily follow that instead of the Agnostic being dependent upon a Christian environment for his virtues he is merely reaping the advantage that comes to all who live in a society of their fellow beings, with traditions, customs, and instincts, that are above and superior to all creeds and to all formulas? May it not be also that in the social environment Christianity itself is a mere accident, and that the better qualities associated therewith are ultimately products of those social forces of which the greatest and the least of men, the most enduring and the most evanescent of creeds, even the gods themselves, are ultimately products?

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

Mirabeau.

GABRIEL HONORE RIQUETTI, son and heir of the Marquis de Mirabeau, was born on March 9, 1747. He came of a wild, strong stock, and was a magnificent "enormous" fellow at his birth, the head being especially great. The turbulent life of the man has been graphically told by Carlyle in his *Essays* and in the *French Revolution*. Faults, he had many, but not that of insincerity; with all his failings, he was a gigantic mass of veracious humanity. "Moralties not a few," says Carlyle, "must shriek condemnatory over this Mirabeau; the Morality by which he could be judged has not yet got uttered in the speech of men."

Mirabeau's work in the National Assembly belongs to history. It was mighty and splendid, but it cannot be recited here. His life burned away during those fateful months, the incessant labor and excitement almost passing credibility. "If I had not lived with him," says Dumont, "I never should have known what a man can make of one day, what things may be placed within the interval of twelve hours. A day for this man was more than a week or a month is for others." One day his secretary said to him, "Monsieur le Comte, what you require is impossible." Whereupon Mirabeau started from his chair, with the memorable ejaculation, "Impossible! Never name to me that blockhead of a word."—*Ne me dites jamais ce bête de mot.*

But the Titan of the Revolution was exhausted before his task was done. In January, 1791, he sat as President of the Assembly with his neck bandaged after the application of leeches. At parting, he said to Dumont, "I am dying, my friend; dying as by slow fire." On March 27, he stood in the tribune for the last time. Four days later, he was on his death-bed. Crowds beset the street, anxious but silent, and stopping all traffic so that their hero might not be disturbed. A bulletin was issued every three hours. "On Saturday, the second day of April," says Carlyle, "Mirabeau feels that the last of the Days has risen for him; that on this day he has to depart and be no more. His death is Titanic, as his life has been. Lit up, for the last time, in the glare of the coming dissolution, the mind of the man is all glowing and burning; utters itself in sayings, such as men long remember. He longs to live, yet acquiesces in death, argues not with the inexorable."

Gazing out on the Spring sun, Mirabeau said, *Si ce n'est pas là Dieu, c'est du moins son cousin german*—If that is not God, it is at least his cousin german. It was the great utterance of an eighteenth century Pagan, looking across the mists of Christian superstition to the saner nature worship of antiquity.

Power of speech gone, Mirabeau made signs for paper and pen, and wrote the word *Dormir*—"To sleep." Cabanis, the great physician, who stood beside him, pretended not to understand this passionate request for opium. Thereupon, writes the doctor, "he made a sign for the pen and paper to be brought to him again, and wrote, 'Do you think that Death is dangerous?'—Seeing that I did not comply with his demand, he wrote again, '.....How can you leave your friend on the wheel, perhaps for days?'" Cabanis and Dr. Petit decided to give him a sedative. While it was sent for "the pains became atrocious." Recovering speech a little under the torture, he turned to M. de la Marck, saying, "You deceive me." "No," replied his friend, "we are not deceiving you, the remedy is coming, we all saw it ordered." "Ah, the doctors, the doctors!" he muttered. Then, turning to Cabanis, with a look of mingled anger and tenderness, he said, "Were you not my doctor and my friend? Did you not promise to spare me the agonies of such a death? Do you wish me to expire with a regret that I trusted you?"

"Those words," says Cabanis, "the last that he uttered, ring incessantly in my ears. He turned over on the right side with a convulsive movement, and at half-past eight in the morning he expired in

our arms." Dr. Petit, standing at the foot of the bed, said "His sufferings are ended." "So dies," writes Carlyle, "a gigantic Heathen and Titan; stumbling blindly, undismayed, down to his rest."

Mirabeau was an Atheist, and he was buried as became his philosophy and his greatness. The Assembly decreed a Public Funeral; there was a procession a league in length, and the very roofs, trees, and lamp-posts, were covered with people. The church of Sainte Geneviève was turned into a Pantheon for the Great Men of the Fatherland—*Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie Reconnaissante*. It was midnight ere the ceremonies ended, and the mightiest man in France was left in the darkness and silence to his long repose. Of him, more than most men, it might well have been said, "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well." *Dormir*—"To sleep," he wrote in his dying agony. Death had no terror for him; it was only the ringing down of the curtain at the end of the drama. From the womb of Nature he sprang, and like a tired child he fell asleep at last on her bosom.

G. W. FOOTE.

The World of Books.

One of the most useful magazines of the day, in the best sense of the words, is the *Humane Review*, which is edited by Mr. H. S. Salt, and published by Ernest Bell, York House, Portugal-street, Lincoln's-inn, London, W.C., quarterly, at one shilling. Four shillings a year secures it post free from the publisher for that period. We may add that it is beautifully printed, and is in every way creditable to the noble cause which it represents.

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The July number of the *Humane Review* is well up to its usual high level of interest and ability. Mr. J. W. Roberts leads off with a strong article on "The Flogging Outlook in Cardiff," arguing effectively against the brutal policy lately favored by the "respectable," and we might add Christian, people there against a certain class of criminals—as though two brutalities made one humanity, and two wrongs one right. Mr. M. Little writes on "Interpreters," dealing with the humane temper of the best English poets towards the lower animals. Nearly the same subject is treated in a later article by Mr. Edward Syers. This writer observes that "religious feeling has not, necessarily, any affinity with fondness of, and consideration for, animals, except to the Buddhist. The Christian religion does not inculcate any such sentiment, and many pious folk have been entirely wanting in it. On the other hand, such sceptics as Byron, Shelley, George Eliot, Darwin, Huxley, Ouida, and Jefferies have possessed it in a high degree." An article on a different theme, and yet in one respect similar, is Mr. Joseph Collinson's powerful "Plea for the Honest Debtor." Imprisonment for debt is not really abolished in England; that it is so, is a popular delusion. More people are imprisoned for debt than ever. The number is positively alarming. Some 20,000 go to gaol for debt every year, and "it would be a low estimate," Mr. Collinson remarks, "to say that at least 10,000 are so punished because they could not pay what they have been ordered to pay." The truth is that the machinery of the criminal law is used as a debt-collecting agency. Moreover, all the 20,000 people imprisoned for debt are poor; the amounts involved being a few shillings or at the utmost a few pounds. The "superior" classes escape by clearing themselves by means of the Bankruptcy Court. Mr. Collinson's article is admirable from every point of view. Excellent, too, is Mr. E. Barry's brief article on "Sane Surroundings for the Insane," giving a deeply interesting account of the wise and humane (and effective) course of procedure at the Illinois Asylum for the Incurable Insane. Sir J. H. Thornton writes admirably on "Vivisection," advocating its entire abolition, and hoping that the medical profession will anticipate the law by voluntarily abandoning the practice. Finally, there is an article on "Biblical Vegetarianism," which is not signed, and is presumably from the pen of Mr. Salt. It is capably written, and we must give it a paragraph to itself.

* * *

"We feel some concern," Mr. Salt says, "at the growing tendency amongst orthodox vegetarians to base their dietetic principles on 'biblical sanction.'" Meat-eaters, of course, have quoted the "Scriptures" as sanctioning their tastes. What, then, is to be done? Mr. Salt's answer is very simple and very satisfactory: "The Bible cannot possibly be taken

as a guide in the discussion of modern problems." As far as the Bible is concerned, however, the truth is that "flesh-eaters have all the best of the battle"—an admission which is all the more important as Mr. Salt is himself a vegetarian of long-standing. Several Old Testament texts are cited, and perverse interpretations of them refuted. In the New Testament, no less a person than Paul asks, "Doth God care for oxen?" And that such a teacher should be appealed to by orthodox vegetarians, "suggests that in the unsuccessful search for biblical sanction the smallest contributions are thankfully received." Mr. Salt winds up in the following polite but resolute manner:—

"We think it is high time some protest were raised against the use made of the Vegetarian Society's 'platform' by the biblical food reformers. The Society reckons among its members men and women of all shades of religious belief or unbelief, and if freethinkers were to couple vegetarianism with freethought, they should be very properly reminded that they have no right to compromise their orthodox fellow workers. But in these matters there must be mutual consideration and give-and-take, and the essential conditions on which all co-operation is based must be observed by the orthodox as well as by the heretical. The Vegetarian Society is a society, not a sect."

This kind of protest is needed in many directions. Christians are so apt to flavor political and social dishes, if they can, with their own peculiar sauce. Even the best of them are sinners in this respect.

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Another quarterly magazine, of a very different character, is the *Hibbert Journal*. The July number contains a long list of articles. Most of them are by clericals or metaphysicians; three of them by laymen—men of the world; and the contrast between the specialists and the amateurs, if we may put it in that way, is quite striking. The former are long-winded, circumlocutory, and even mysterious; the latter are simple, sincere, and direct. The truth is, we take it, that the laymen have something to say, and try to say it; while the clerical gentlemen have really nothing to say in particular, their object being simply to hide the fact that religion is in full retreat; to hide it, that is to say, from the friends of religion, for its enemies are in no doubt whatever as to what is going on.

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We will take the divines and metaphysicians first. Professor William James, the American psychologist, leads off with an article on "Pluralism and Religion." This clever writer is mainly occupied in giving Theists, if not Christians, reasons for clinging to the relics of their old faith. There is something in us, he says, that seems to show (we like that *seems!*) "a world wider than either physics or philistine ethics can imagine." Man's consciousness—at least, the consciousness of the elect, like Professor James—is related to a superhuman consciousness. But the old idea of a superhuman consciousness, as belonging to a personal being who is infinite in time and space, is played out in the presence of modern science. Professor James, who knows a thing or two, is well aware of this fact; he argues, therefore, that "the superhuman consciousness, however vast it may be, has itself an external environment, and consequently is *finite*." There is a God, but he is "finite, either in power or knowledge, or in both at once." Such a God is not liable to the indictment that has been drawn up so convincingly against the Almighty God of Nature. Mill gave this hint to the theologians long ago, and they are now beginning to accept it, if only as a counsel of despair. The new God, as Professor James advises them, is a friendly sort of being who does the best he can for us and himself; and is not like "the unintelligible pantheistic absolutist monster" or "the unreal God of scholastic theology," but a "more living divine reality," with which we may "more and more connect our imagination." Such is the policy of what we may call "New Gods for Old."

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Professor James's article is, naturally, by far the best on his own side in the *Hibbert Journal*. Some of the other religious contributors write like the leading spirits in an erudite lunatic asylum. We will not specify, for it is hardly worth while. We turn instead to the articles by the laymen. The first is by M. René-L. Gérard, Avocat at the Liège Court of Appeal, on "Civilisation in Danger." We may deal with this article at some length later on. For the present we will only say that it is very interesting and suggestive. The author's position is that, while the levelling of society brings the masses better conditions, the moral and intellectual result is the "lowering of the *élite* to a uniform level with all the rest." Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie gives his views on "The Right to Constrain Men for their own Good." Most of what he says is worthy of consideration, like all he writes, but is outside our own scope in this journal. One sentence, however, may be noted. "To constrain the teaching of a people out of proportion to their physical requirements

is," he declares, "to injure them, if not to exterminate them, as is seen in actual instances." This is a note of grave warning.

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Dr. Fridtjof Nansen's article on "Science and the Purpose of Life," a Presidential Address delivered to the Social and Political Education League, 1907, is the most important contribution to the July number of the *Hibbert Journal*. This article has a thoroughgoing Freethought tone from the beginning to the end. Dr. Nansen points out that the indestructibility of matter actually means the same thing as the conservation of energy. He takes the view that the universe is infinite in time and space, that "it has always existed and will go on for ever." Suns and planets begin and end; the destruction and re-creation of celestial systems is an eternal process. Man's history is an episode in the history of this planet, and this planet is a very small episode in the history of the universe. Life is but a form of energy, and—"To ask, therefore, what is the purpose of life, or what is the purpose of the inorganic world, is a question of very much the same kind as if one were to ask what is the purpose of the rotation of the earth." Man should learn modesty. It is man's vanity which gives rise to pessimism. Death, as the end of life, is not a sad thing; it is "a blessing, a relief an emancipation." "The certain knowledge that man has this one life," Dr. Nansen says, "is the crowning truth of science which makes him fit to live it." Every citizen in a civilised community should be "brought up to understand that his one duty towards himself and others is to make the most out of *this* life, to develop in himself the possibilities nature has given him, and be as happy as possible." Dr. Nansen winds up by quoting the glorious Elizabethan verse of Beaumont and Fletcher—"Man is his own star," though he slightly misquotes the rest of that splendid passage. We may express astonishment, in conclusion, at so bold, outspoken, and uncompromising an article appearing in such a magazine.

Acid Drops.

Mahatma Agamya Guru, Holy Man of the East and God of Gods, has been sentenced at the Marylebone Police-court to four months' imprisonment with hard labor for assaulting girls. He is said to be a great Sanskrit scholar (but evidently he studies other subjects also), and chief of the priests of the Order to which he belongs. "By long years of study," his counsel said, "he had arrived at a period when, according to his belief, he was in communion with the eternal spirit that pervaded the universe, and when he could say that he was as much a God as the eternal spirit." This may sound blasphemous, but it is on all-fours with what the Rev. R. J. Campbell teaches in his *New Theology*. As to his amorous proclivities—in spite of his sixty-seven years—one need not be too surprised or indignant. Catholic and Protestant gentlemen in the same line of business so often display a similar disposition. We see that the Mahatma has many lady disciples. No doubt they will console and comfort him when he is free from the hands of the Philistines.

Not a trace has been found of the wretch or madman who murdered poor little Marie Ellen Bailes, of Islington. Some people are blaming the police, but they cannot work with success on nothing. The murderer was very careful to do everything that might prevent his falling into the hands of justice. The Lord knows who killed the poor child, and he keeps silent. He saw her murdered, and provided the murderer with sufficient breath to do the deed, besides the cunning to evade detection. Yet the child's mother, a Roman Catholic, while refusing to take an oath (as she said) over the dead body of her child, dramatically declared that "God Almighty would deal with the murderer." What a strange consolation! God Almighty, if such a being exist, should have interfered at an earlier stage of the affair—say, when the poor child was being lured to her doom. To let the crime be committed, in order to deal with the criminal afterwards, is criminal insanity. In that case, the Deity would be a worse monster than the assassin.

The Rev. F. C. Spurr has had a most startling revelation made to him. He has found out that the working men of South-east London, instead of attending church and chapel, spend their Sundays at clubs, and that these clubs are more or less hostile to parsons. The great fault of these clubs is that they draw their members away from other clubs, such as the one over which Mr. Spurr presides. It is in the spirit of rivalry that this gentleman writes. He wants to know what the ecclesiastical clubs can do to counteract the influence of these political and social clubs which prove such an irresistible attraction to the great mass of working men.

There is really nothing against these latter clubs. Their presidents give excellent moral exhortations to the members. Nothing occurs at them which Mr. Spurr can describe as wrong. It is true that a paper published in their interest contains advertisements "setting forth the virtues of certain whiskies, beers, and tobaccos," but similar advertisements are to be found in all our daily papers, except the *Daily News*. No, the brunt of their offending is that they are rapidly emptying the clubs of Zion, and so destroying the tyranny of superstition which has hitherto been so blessedly profitable to priests of all names. Working men will know how to take Mr. Spurr's impertinent deliverance—if they see it.

Dr. Nansen, in his *Hibbert Journal* article, has some apt remarks on the conceit of religious teaching that parades the world as modesty and humility, and points out that, much as the Christian talks of modesty and humility as Christian virtues, this does not "prevent him believing that he belongs to the few selected ones, or from considering his own doctrines as alone true and saving." His own position is identical with—so far as the purpose of life is concerned—that of Omar Khayyam, from whom he quotes. His critics are met by anticipation in the following rebuke:—

"Those who think this a depressing view of things, fit to make people pessimists, should consider whether the fault may not be in their own education, which has inflated them with a fatal overestimation of the importance of humanity and of themselves. Had they learnt real modesty from the beginning there would be no danger.....Philosophers of antiquity held similar views of existence without despairing." A wise deliverance, which Christians in particular would do well to ponder.

The Rev. Dr. Amory Bradford, of America, furnishes a signal illustration of that lack of "true modesty" which Dr. Nansen tell us is so characteristic of Christians generally. Preaching at Edinburgh recently, Dr. Bradford assured his hearers that the "Church is the moral leader of individual souls," that "Jesus has created the social ideals of the modern world," and that "Jesus is leading the nations of the modern world." No one of those three assertions is true. Nay, more, the whole three are utterly false, as it can be abundantly shown from history. And yet such is the overweening conceit and official pride of these sky pilots, that they will go on repeating lies a thousand times exposed.

The delegates to the International Congregational Council that has just been held at Edinburgh, were a heterogeneous crowd. Some were orthodox in the strictest sense, some affected a modernised orthodoxy, some were Higher Critics and pulled the Bible to pieces, and some complained that the Holy Book was being "greatly belittled, and God almost explained out of it altogether." There prevailed nothing like unanimity of opinion as to the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." Sir Joseph Compton Rickett, M.P., called solemn attention to the fact that present theological views are always in "danger of being revised in the course of the next twelve months." What further proof need we of the gradual disintegration of the Christian religion?

The Rev. Dr. Brook, president of the National Free Church Council, declares that "the Holy Ghost is the only hope of the Church" now. Then the Church is indeed doomed! And yet we do not learn that Dr. Brook and his brethren are offering to retire in favor of the Holy Ghost, and so give him a real chance, which he has never yet had.

A writer in the *Methodist Times*, while arguing in favor of women taking a larger official share in public affairs than at present, points out that "it was in great part the idleness, luxury, and vice of the semi-enslaved women of Rome that brought about its downfall." Doubtless the writer has the traditional Christian conception of the state of Rome under Pagan control, and for the present, we will let it pass unquestioned. There is, however, a certain truth in the statement, although one not acceptable to Christians. There had grown up in Rome—as there exists to-day—an idle, rich class which, with its wealth, manifested a declining sense of responsibility. The number included both men and women for the reason that women were not the ciphers that they subsequently became under Christian rule. It is true also that this class contributed immediately to the downfall of the Empire, but not in the manner usually believed. The striking feature about life in Rome in the first and second centuries of this era is the enormous influx and growth of Eastern superstitions. And, again, as in our time, a large number of those who took up with these superstitions belonged to the idle, luxuried classes; while of these, a great proportion were women. There is good reason for believing that a number of the earliest converts to Christianity in

Rome were women, and that many of these were of position and wealth. Letting alone the "vice" of Rome, which was really not any greater than it has been at many subsequent periods, it is true that idleness and luxury played their part in the downfall of the Empire. But—and this is the important point—it was this partial decay that provided the occasion for the growth and establishment of Christianity. While Rome was strong and healthy it held all the Eastern creeds at a safe distance. But as a debilitated organism affords a breeding-ground for dangerous microbes, so the debilitated Roman State offered the occasion for the growth of the social and intellectual disease afterwards known as Christianity. We agree, therefore, that the idle, rich women of Rome contributed to the downfall of the Empire; and it did this by aiding in the spread and establishment of Christianity.

Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham, in last week's *New Age*, had an article on "The Real Equality of the Sexes," from which we take the following passage on Christianity and Woman:—

"The Christian religion has been too readily assumed to have been the only faith which has raised women in the social scale.

Only repeat that which is false long enough, loud enough, and with a sanctimonious air, and people will believe you, although they know it is a lie. In point of fact, it has taken nineteen hundred years for women to gain the same equality before the law as they enjoyed in the time of Hadrian. The Romans had a married woman's property act at least as much in woman's favor as is our own.

During those nineteen hundred years the Church, whether Greek, Roman, Anglican, or Nonconformist, has fought against all efforts to place men and women on an equality before the law. All know the mediæval Church's attitude towards woman as a sex. She was unclean, a snare, the undoer of mankind. Virginity was placed above the maternal state, thus showing that the Church thought she knew better what was good for us than did the power she knew as God. Only when priests were feed and Latin mumbled was commerce between the sexes aught but a deadly sin.

Thus did the Church degrade both sexes, and constitute itself the universal brothel-keeper of mankind."

We have been saying this for ever so many years in the *Freethinker*, in books and in pamphlets, and in lectures; and we are naturally glad to see our views on this important subject being now endorsed by more "respectable" and influential writers.

The Rev. D. Walters, of Leeds, regrets that many of the Passive Resisters of that city are forsaking the cause. Still, he cultivates a Mark Tapley kind of a spirit by the reflection "God is with us." At the same time he regrets the impotence of the Liberal Government, which seems quite unable to get the Nonconformists what they desire. Why the Liberal Government should be impotent with God and Mr. Walters on its side is a trifle perplexing. It really looks as though "God is with us," while pretty enough as a motto, is not worth much in practice.

Judge Willis, who is a Baptist, believes that he was providentially led to Norfolk. The reason is not apparent, beyond the fact that his Honor confessed to great happiness while worshipping at Scarning Baptist Church. Of course, Providence may have taken a special interest in making Judge Willis comfortable, although we have our doubts on that point. The Judge also expressed his belief that "there was not a movement in a man's life which was not directed from heaven." Really! Now, suppose a man is moved to break into someone's dwelling-house with "felonious intent," would Judge Willis take into consideration the fact that this man's movements were directed from heaven before passing sentence? If he believes this, why should he punish a man for doing as heaven directs? Or if he replies that heaven directs him to inflict the sentence, why does he not bring a charge against "heaven" of being an accessory before the fact? Judge Willis seems to be in a hopeless muddle, and we would advise him to recast this portion of his "bright and breezy address"—to quote the report in the *British Weekly*.

We are getting on! Here is the Rev. David Smith, in the *British Weekly*, informing a correspondent that the "Lord's Prayer" is "wholly unoriginal—a mere mosaic of petitions from the Jewish Liturgy, particularly the morning prayer." It has taken many years to get Christians to admit this obvious truth, but better late than never.

A religious contemporary raises the question of political preachers in the pulpit, and suggests that politics in the churches is a new departure, and one that is likely to lead to trouble. But, as a matter of fact, the churches always have interfered in politics, although, until recently, the

method was of a different kind. The advice of the churches used to be to render obedience to all constituted authority, and that the mass of the people should conduct themselves lowly and reverently towards their betters. But now that the temper of the age is different, and such preaching would empty a church instead of filling it, the policy is to work a more or less pretended enthusiasm for social reform, while, at the same time, giving the "classes" the quiet hint that religion is the one thing that can hold the "lawless" section of society in check. And as the ones who receive the hint know perfectly well what is meant by "lawless," the churches are able to pose as the friends of the poor without sacrificing the financial support of the wealthy.

The Archbishop of Melbourne, who is at present in London, has been giving some advice to girls about to be married. His advice is, "Don't let him take you to a registrar's office." Of course, there is nothing in the nature of a trade puff in this advice. It looks like "Don't deal at any other shop but mine"; but this would, of course, be a mistaken view of the matter. For every clergyman—particularly archbishops—is much above taking a trade view of so serious a matter as marriage.

The Rev. Dr. Warschauer may imagine that in his defence of Christianity he is not unfair to Agnostics. He chivalrously admits that, on the average, they are morally about equal to Christians; but, he triumphantly asks, where did they get their morality? They got it from the Gospel; it is the product not of Agnosticism, but of Christianity. But Dr. Warschauer ought to know that such a claim is the very opposite of true. It has been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the moral virtues inculcated in Christendom to-day are distinctly not of Christian origin, but of Greek and Gothic. Let the reverend gentleman consult the moral code laid down by the Gospel Jesus, and tell us to what extent it is being observed. He evades this issue altogether.

Preachers seem to be incapable of being accurate in a single statement. The Rev. F. B. Meyer, for example, says that "when Dr. Parker was quite a young lad he was accustomed to hold argument with infidels outside the great iron works on Tyneside," and that "one day an infidel challenged him, and said, What did God do for Stephen?" Dr. Parker was nonplussed, but God gave him the right answer in prayer. That incident occurred, not on Tyneside, and when Dr. Parker was "quite a young lad," but at Banbury, after he had been for some time a full-fledged minister, in a public debate with the late Mr. Holyoake. If men of God cannot be accurate in small matters, who can trust them on more important points?

The Rev. J. R. Brooke is a man of commendable caution. Whilst he is quite ready to re-echo Father Bull's assertion that "Socialism is God's next step in this world," he does so in "a private capacity, and not as an ambassador from God with an infallible message." That is to say, God has told Mr. Brooke what his next step is going to be, but not officially. Father Bull has been chosen as an infallible ambassador on this occasion, only Mr. Brooke is able to assure the public, "in a private capacity," has delivered the message correctly. What ineffable tomfoolery!

A correspondent of the *Hereford Times* journeyed to Shrewsbury to take part in certain "mission festival services," and hear the Bishop of Sacramento preach. To his (or her) horror, the sermon of the Bishop with the fine name was "a recitation well learned and well delivered"—in fact, it was a sermon originally preached and published by the late-lamented Dr. Talmage. This "unabashed display of fraud and dishonesty," this "act of spiritual mendacity of the worst possible description," made "Veritas" hang his (or her) head with shame. We daresay the Bishop will smile at such sensitiveness. Preaching other men's sermons is by no means an uncommon game. Manuscript sermons are supplied to lazy or incompetent preachers at a moderate rate. Many years ago we came across a clever parson "out of collar" through drink, who got his living—and not a bad one either—by writing such sermons. What he composed under the influence of whiskey was palmed off in many a pulpit as the product of a holier inspiration.

The other morning the *Daily Chronicle* gave a half-column account of the Bryanite Convention at Denver. Further down in the same column was a report of the Greek celebration in London, in which it was stated that a Ceele tenor sang several pieces, including "Bryan's Isles of Greece." Bryan's! Such is fame! Poor Byron!

The Rev. Rhondda Williams undertakes the onerous task of interpreting the ambitions of the people. The poor things imagine that they are only seeking material comfort and other secular boons, but in reality what they are hungering for is communion with God. Mr. Williams has had "a vision of the soul," and knows what he is talking about. Perhaps one of these days the reverend gentleman will experience a rude awakening.

The Rev. J. H. Jowett describes communicants as the "guests of the Lord"; but usually guests do not eat their host, as Christians claim to do theirs. "Eating the god" is common to most religions, of which we have numerous examples in Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

M. Joseph Reinach, speaking in the French Chamber in favor of the abolition of the death penalty, attributed the increase of a certain kind of criminality in France to drink. No doubt drink and the festering of overcrowded big cities are responsible for this phenomenon. The *Gaulois* remarks that there is more drunkenness in England, yet the number of murderers is fewer. But this overlooks the differences of temperament between the two nations. When the *Gaulois* goes on to attribute the evil to "the abolition of religious teaching" in the French schools, it overlooks the fact that no such evil flows from secular education in Japan. Neither does it in those parts of the English-speaking world where secular education has been adopted. The *Gaulois* must try again.

The Rev. Principal Forsyth, of Hackney College, is a great theologian—a very great one. His specialty is "Forgiveness through Atonement" only, and he knows all about it. The saints of the Old Testament were saved on credit, while those of to-day receive their pardon on actual payment. Well, if that is true, the fiery lake must be of enormous dimensions and extremely well filled; and among the consuming, but unconsumed, inhabitants are to be found the greatest and most interesting characters this world has ever seen, from Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, the great Buddha, and Virgil downwards. Where such geniuses are life cannot be dull, at any rate.

We have been favored with one of the sensational little bills issued by the Salvation Army at Bury, announcing the time of General Booth's arrival there in his White Car, which we venture to regard as suggestive of the Grand Old Showman's being in the service of the occupant of the Great White Throne. For at the bottom of the bill is printed, "Eternity! Where will you spend it?" But perhaps this is intended as a hint that those who do not welcome William Booth, and contribute to his various funds, will spend eternity in the wrong place. The good old gospel of Blood and Blazes!

The newspapers make a fuss about the "Southern Cross Pearl" which is exhibited at the West Australian Court in the Franco-British Exhibition. It is valued at £10,000—whatever it may be worth, and consists of nine pearls in the form of a cross. The Manilla diver who found it regarded it as of divine origin, and wanted to present it to the Pope, but it has fallen into ordinary commercial hands. Of course it is but one of the many curiosities that nature presents. Wonderful likenesses of famous men have been found in agates and other stones, and it is conceivable that a likeness of Jesus Christ himself may turn up some day. The world abounds in strange things, which are only strange because they come upon us as surprises. There would have been no room for wonder if we had followed the process of their growth or construction.

Truth laughs at the late Pan-Anglican Congress, and says that its results are "contemptible." Hopelessly stale and hackneyed subjects occupied attention. "Really practical topics," our lively contemporary says, "were carefully avoided, such as the scandalous extravagance of missionary societies, the slovenly carelessness of a great majority of the clergy in all matters of business, especially in financial affairs, the cant and humbug with which so many ecclesiastical utterances are saturated." This is very plain speaking, even for *Truth*.

The Bishop of Gloucester preached at St. Savior's Church, Oxford-street, London, on Sunday to a congregation of deaf mutes. His lordship, whose sermon had to be interpreted to them, chose a singular text for the occasion, namely, Genesis xiii. 2, "I will bless thee.....and thou shalt be a blessing." The preacher's intention seems to have been to justify the ways of God to men—especially to deaf mutes. "The doctrine of election," he said, "was profoundly true.

But God did not choose a man or a nation as a matter of favoritism. A man was chosen and endowed in order that he might be a blessing to others." The deaf mutes understand now; at least, they ought to. God has afflicted them, and chosen and endowed the Bishop of Gloucester, in order that he might be a blessing to them by favoring them with a sermon, which they receive for nothing, and for which he is handsomely paid. No doubt the Bishop is perfectly satisfied with his side of the problem; and if the deaf mutes are not satisfied, it only shows what a peevish temper human beings so frequently display towards God and the clergy. Everything really is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

The Grocers' Federation Conference, at Middlesbrough, passed the following resolution:—

"That this conference desires to express its great regret at the tendency shown by the workers in some religious organisations to engage in trading transactions under the names of goose clubs, discount clubs, and the like. The conference regards such trading carried on in buildings devoted to religious purposes as very unfair to ratepayers, as such buildings do not bear those rateable burdens which weigh so heavily upon shopkeepers. At the same time ministers are by this form of trading brought into fierce competition with shopkeepers who are warm supporters of religious work. The conference directs that this resolution be sent to the Wesleyan Conference, sitting at York, and expresses the hope that that conference will express an opinion that such trading should be discouraged."

In courting the working classes, for business reasons, the Churches run a serious risk of alienating the middle classes, who are their principal supporters.

Rev. H. E. Wright, of Redhill, described as a promising young Wesleyan minister, jumped overboard from a steamer between Folkestone and Boulogne. A question for Dr. Torrey:—Is this another Atheist? Francis Manser, who shot his mother, his wife, two dogs, and himself at West Croydon, had been attended by doctors for "mental trouble" and "religious mania." Another of Torrey's "Atheists."

South London bigots are still acting after their kind towards the Camberwell N. S. S. Branch meetings in Brockwell Park. Having failed in their pious effort to break the meetings up, they are now petitioning the Lambeth Borough Council to protect the good Christians against "the indecent language of Atheists" at public gatherings. The ringleader of this noble exhibition of Christian charity is Councillor Hutson, of whom it is difficult to say whether he is more a coward than a bigot or more a bigot than a coward. He has induced 342 ratepayers to sign the aforesaid petition, and he has the impudence to pretend that "some of them are Secularists." Councillor Briant told the worthy Hutson to his face, at the Council meeting, that the only indecency that could be alleged against the Secularists was that one of their lecturers read out a Bible text in response to a direct challenge from Christians in the meeting. We see from the *South London Press* that the Rev. A. J. Waldron declines to sign this petition. He is a warier bigot than the worthy Hutson, and appreciates the dangers of a crusade against free speech in a country like England.

South London Freethinkers will, of course, see that the Camberwell Branch's platform in Brockwell Park is properly supported. But there and elsewhere the "saints" will do well to listen to our advice. They should refrain from going to the C. E. S. meetings at all. Let them leave the pious hooligan speakers severely alone. Taking notice of them, and helping to supply them with audiences, is simply playing their game for them. Freethinkers have been guilty of too much folly in this direction. We beg them to act differently in future. Liars and libellers should only be dealt with when they are important enough to be made examples of. The small fry of calumny should be left to their own insignificance.

This policy needs a little self-restraint, but Freethinkers who are incapable of that virtue are likely to do the cause far more harm than good. If we acted "naturally," as some call it, we should half fill the *Freethinker* every week with malicious falsehoods about ourselves and our colleagues. Only last Sunday, for instance, a Christian Evidence lecturer, speaking on the congenial topic of Walton Powell, who is once more doing time, told his audience that this unspeakable scoundrel was "a convert of Mr. Foote's and a member of the N. S. S." This is an absolute lie. Walton Powell was not an "infidel" but an "anti-infidel." He never was, and never pretended to be, a Freethinker. But we daresay twenty other absolute lies were told at C. E. S. meetings last Sunday, and why should we waste our time, week after week, on the movements of such pious vermin?

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended during the summer.)

To Correspondents

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Previously acknowledged. Annual Subscriptions, £196 4s. 6d Received since.—W. J. Paul, 5s.; Robert Stirton and Friends (quarterly), £1 4s. 6d.; W. H. Barratt, 2s. 6d.; Lancastrian, 5s.; D. B. N., 10s.; Bob Miller, 1s.; J. D. Stones, £1 1s.; A. Clarke, 10s.

R. J. HENDERSON.—See paragraph. Thanks.

ROBERT STIRTON (Dundee), sending subscriptions on behalf of himself and friends to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "I am meeting with very good encouragement in working for this object, all whom I have yet approached responding very heartily."

V. P.—It was dealt with in last week's issue, though you had not seen that number before you wrote. Thanks, all the same.

W. H. BARRATT.—The two tracts you want are not in print now. Fresh supplies of tracts will be announced presently. Glad to hear you have been able to do a little missionary work for Freethought privately at Bristol, a place that reeks with piety.

"LANCASTRIAN" subscribes to the President's Honorarium Fund as "one who loves a fearless fighter"—and "hopes the suggested figure will be exceeded."

T. W. HAUGHTON writes from County Antrim, Ireland: "I read the *Freethinker* with increasing interest and admiration every week. The essence of its pages is clearness of thought and close reasoning. Many of its articles are, in my estimation, of great literary value, and I may tell you I am keeping every copy with a view to having them bound in six-monthly volumes for my own use, and to leave to my children. Comparatively few people are aware of the existence of the *Freethinker*. I am convinced it would have thousands of additional readers if it were advertised and freely offered for sale." This correspondent thinks that our readers should send in suggestions as to how this desideratum could be secured.

W. J. PAUL writes: "We want £15 per week for the next eight weeks to complete the President's Honorarium Fund. Five hundred of our army could complete this work in one week by hurling that number of 5s. orders into Newcastle-street."

A. D. CORRICK.—Paper returned as desired. Probably you noticed our little mem. in the top corner. We may add that nearly all the pious ejaculations related to side issues, as though the ejaculator had quite failed to follow the writers' arguments.

F. B. WAKEFIELD.—It was dealt with in our last issue. Thanks.

S. DAWSON.—The quotation you send us from Ernest Untermann's *Science and Revelation* seems to us sheer nonsense. For a man who does not believe in God to write of Atheism as "simply mental anarchy," and of Atheists as "without any recognition of the constructive tendencies of evolution" is the veriest absurdity. We cannot waste time on a deliberate criticism of such stuff.

JAMES TULLIN.—The unhappy man was in no way identified with the Freethought movement. Why, then, need we concern ourselves? Sorry to hear there are so few "saints" or such inactive ones at Sunderland. We hope that it is not a correct surmise that "some of them may be helping the local Labor Party to run a Christian Socialist brand of politics."

F. R. TREAKSTONE.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

H. FLETCHER.—The author of "Mr. H's leaflet" must reply to his critics—if anybody. It is no business of ours. We defend our own statements.

GERALD MANSEY FUND.—J. D. Stones, 5s.

J. D. STONES, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, which he intends to do annually, writes: "I am a reader of the *Freethinker* from its first number, and I love the paper as much as ever. I don't really know what I should do without it, should such a calamity occur as its discontinuance. Permit me to thank you for the resumption of 'Book Chat' under another name. The two instalments already given are charming reading." This correspondent is informed that Mr. Foote is keeping well.

A. HINDLEY AND S. WARD wrote to that pious Bradford advertiser, referred to in last week's "Acid Drops," and received no reply.

J. C. CRAMER (U.S.A.).—Glad you liked the sample copy of this journal, and are subscribing for a year in advance. We agree with you that "Liberals"—or Freethinkers as we call them here—do not support their own papers as they should.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

G. ROLEFFS.—Thanks.

H. J. WILLIAMS.—Glad you have been able to get the *Freethinker* into the Trebarris Workmen's Reading Room. Reference noted.

E. McNULTY.—Will reply next week.

V. PAGE.—The alleged "Atheist monument" in the *Sunday Circle* is doubtless fudge.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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Sugar Plums.

The first of the Sunday Freethought Demonstrations that are being organised under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive will take place on Sunday, July 26, at Parliament Hill Fields, at 6.15 p.m. This will probably be a cooler time than would obtain in the afternoon, and therefore more convenient for both the speakers and the audience. Mr. E. Wilson has kindly promised to supply a brake and pair of horses for the occasion. Mr. Foote will attend and speak, and as he has not been heard in London for some time there will doubtless be a big rally of North London "saints" But they should not come alone. They should bring along as many as possible of their more orthodox friends and acquaintances. The other speakers will be Mr. C. Cohen and Mr. F. A. Davies, both of whom are so well-known in the London open-air propaganda.

The following Sunday Freethought Demonstrations have also been arranged for:—Sunday, August 9, Victoria Park; Sunday, August 16, Regent's Park; Sunday, August 23, Brockwell Park. Fuller details will be printed in future issues of the *Freethinker*.

We beg to call attention again to the Social Gathering, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, which is to take place at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, at 8 p.m., on Thursday, July 30. There will be, as before, no charge for admission. Members of the N. S. S. are all invited to attend, and they may introduce a friend. Non-members, who are unable to be introduced in this way, can obtain an admission card by writing to the N. S. S. secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. Mr. G. W. Foote will be present with several of his colleagues, including Messrs. C. Cohen and J. T. Lloyd. There will be a little vocal and instrumental music, etc., and plenty of opportunity for conversation. We hope there will be a large muster on this occasion.

One of our ever-welcome exchanges is the New York *Truthseeker*, edited by Mr. E. M. Macdonald, with the valuable assistance of his brother George. We regret to see from a recent number of that journal, dated June 27, that Mr. Macdonald has been ill for some time, and is camping out near the township of Liberty, with a view to recovering his health. When this number of the *Freethinker* meets his eyes he will see that he has our heartiest sympathy and most earnest wishes for his complete success in that enterprise. Mr. Macdonald has led the simple life, so we fear his breakdown is due to a too close application to the duties of his position. While he is seeking health, and we hope finding it, the paper is in the very capable hands of brother George, whose head is in the right place and his heart as much as any man's in the cause of Freethought.

The New York *Truthseeker* reproduces our recent article on "Socialism and Religion" in reply to Mr. A. M. Thompson of the *Clarion*. The editor, or perhaps his brother George, writes an article in the same number on "Christianity and Socialism," which we are reproducing in turn. We are not called upon to correct or endorse Mr. Macdonald's view of Socialism itself. We let that part of the article stand because it is best to print the whole of it—and there is no harm in hearing what is being said on the subject in a Freethought contemporary.

Fruits of Faith.—II.

(Continued from p. 444.)

RAYMOND, Viscount of Beziers, who ruled the country, acknowledging the King of Arragon as his lord, sent ambassadors to the Pope to tender his submission. The Pope received them with apparent indulgence, but it was required of him that he should make common cause with the Crusaders; that he should assist them in exterminating the heretics—his own subjects; and that he should surrender seven of his strongest castles as a pledge of his intentions. At the same time the Pope wrote to the leaders of the Crusade:—

"We counsel you, with the apostle Paul, to employ guile with regard to this Count, for in this case it ought to be called prudence. We must attack, separately, those who are separated from unity, leave for a time the Count of Toulouse, employing towards him a wise dissimulation, that the other heretics may be more easily defeated, and that afterwards we may crush him when he shall be left alone."*

A policy which the leaders carried out to the letter.

They obtained the City of Beziers without fighting. The population, which had been largely increased by the multitude who had fled there for safety upon the approach of the Crusaders—and who have been variously estimated at from 38,000 to 60,000—took refuge in the churches as a sanctuary against the violence of their foes, and to supplicate the Heavenly Father to save them. But the Heavenly Father might as well have been one of those idols of wood or stone to which the heathen in his blindness bows down, for all the notice he took of their prayers. Of that immense multitude not one was spared. In the Church of the Magdalen alone seven thousand dead bodies were counted. The great cathedral of Saint Nicaise contained more than the Magdalen. Says Sismondi:—

"When the Crusaders had massacred the last living creature in Beziers, and had pillaged the houses of all that they thought worth carrying off, they set fire to the city in every part at once, and reduced it to a vast funeral pile. Not a house remained standing, not one human being alive" (p. 36).

The terror inspired by this frightful massacre caused the inhabitants to fly at the approach of the Crusaders, who found more than a hundred castles deserted. They still advanced, however, unsatiated with blood, until they arrived before Carcassonne. Raymond Roger, with three hundred of his knights, trusting to a safe conduct and the most complete guarantee for his safety and liberty, both from the Pope's representative and the lords of the army, confirmed by the most solemn oaths, trusted himself in the camp of the Legate. "But," says Sismondi, "the Legate was profoundly penetrated with the maxim of Innocent III., that 'to keep faith with those who have it not is an offence against the faith.'" He caused them all to be arrested. Fortunately, the inhabitants of the city heard of the treachery, and, taking advantage of a secret passage, three miles long, escaped with their lives, leaving all their possessions behind them. However, a certain number of poor wretches had been captured in the fields, and some of the fugitives had been overtaken and brought to camp. From these and the three hundred knights already in hand he selected four hundred and fifty men and women for execution. Four hundred he caused to be burned alive, and fifty to be hanged.

The object of the Crusade was now accomplished. The Count of Toulouse had made a most humiliating submission. The Viscount of Narbonne had published laws against the heretics—laws of the utmost rigor—in order to avoid a similar visit. The Viscount of Beziers was a prisoner, his two strongest cities were destroyed, and most of his castles deserted. The French lords began to feel some qualms for all

the blood which had been shed, and for their word, which had been falsified:—

"The Legate of the Pope alone felt that he had not done enough.....To turn back the march of civilisation, to obliterate the traces of a mighty progress of the human mind, it was not sufficient to sacrifice, for an example, some thousands of victims: the nation must be destroyed; all who had participated in the development of thought and of science must perish, and none must be spared but the lowest rustics, whose intelligence is scarcely superior to the beasts whose labors they share. Such was the object of the abbot Arnold, and he did not deceive himself as to the means of accomplishing it."*

The sovereignty of the States was handed over to the monster Simon de Montfort, whose first act was to murder his prisoner Raymond, the rightful ruler, and give it forth that he had died of dysentery. "The ruins of so fair a country," says Sismondi, "the contrast between its former opulence and its present desolation would soon have caused the fury of the war to have been succeeded by a deep-felt pity, if any other cause than religious fanaticism had armed the hands of the Crusaders" (p. 51). Only religion was equal to the task of stifling the common dictates of humanity. The Crusaders were too intent upon pleasing God to leave room for a feeling of pity or compassion for their victims. And yet the preachers of this religion have the face to assert that without religion it is impossible to be moral!

De Montfort proceeded to a war of extermination. He caused all the inhabitants he could lay hands upon to be hanged. The Castle of Brom, calculating upon its strength, ventured to resist; it was taken by assault, and more than a hundred of the wretched inhabitants had their eyes torn out, their noses cut off, and in that state, under the guidance of a one-eyed man, they were sent to the Castle of Cabaret, to announce to the garrison the fate that awaited them.

At the taking of Lavaur, when De Montfort judged the breach to be practicable, the Crusaders prepared for the assault. The bishops and priests, clothed with their pontifical habits, "giving themselves up to the joy of seeing the carnage begin, sang the hymn *Veni Creator*." Simon de Montfort beseeched the Crusaders to take captives, "that the priests of the living God might not be deprived of their promised joys." They dragged out of the castle Aimery, Lord of Montreal, and eighty of his knights. De Montfort immediately ordered them to be hanged; but as soon as Aimery, the stoutest of them, was hanged, the gallows, which had been hastily erected, fell down. De Montfort, seeing that this would cause delay, ordered the rest to be massacred; and the monkish historian, who was an eye-witness of the scene, records—

"and the pilgrims, receiving the order with the utmost avidity, very soon massacred them all upon the spot. The lady of the castle, who was the sister of Aimery, and an execrable heretic, was, by the count's [De Montfort's] order, thrown into a pit, which was filled up with stones; afterwards, our pilgrims collected the innumerable heretics that the castle contained, and burned them alive with the utmost joy."†

These enormous crimes are not put on record by enemies of the Church; they are recorded, with savage exultation, by the monks themselves. Sismondi says we owe to Peter, monk of Vaux-Cernay, the admirer of Simon de Montfort, and who accompanied the Crusade, the details of these monstrous crimes, which are confirmed by other historians.

Neither was it a case of race hatred; it was religious hatred pure and simple; and all Europe took part in the massacre. It was not the work of the French alone. The Italian, Innocent III., first gave the signal, and "continually sharpened the swords of the murderers by his legates and missionaries." The two Spaniards, the Bishop of Oyma and Saint Dominic, the founders of the Inquisition, "first taught the art of seeking out, in the villages, those

* Sismondi, *History of the Crusades against the Albigenses*, 1826; p. 29.

* Sismondi, p. 44.
† Sismondi, p. 77.

whom the priests were afterwards to fasten to their stakes. The Germans, invited by their monks, came to take part in this work, even from the extremities of Austria; and the English Matthew Paris renders testimony to the zeal of his countrymen in the same cause, and to their triumphant joy at the miracle (for so he called the massacre of Beziers) which had avenged the Lord" (p. 53).

Neither were the Crusaders—apart from their religion—bad men. Sismondi tells us:—

"Those who committed so many crimes were not, for the greater part, bad men. They came from that part of Burgundy and Northern France where crimes have always been rare, where long contentions, hatred and vengeance are passions almost unknown—and where the unhappy are always sure to find compassion and aid. The Crusaders themselves were always ready to afford each other proofs of generosity, of support, and compassion; but the heretics were, in their eyes, outcasts from the human race.....The more zealous they were for the glory of God, the more ardently they labored for the destruction of heretics, the better Christians they thought themselves. And if at any time they felt a movement of pity or terror, whilst assisting at their punishment, they thought it a revolt of the flesh, which they confessed at the tribunal of penitence; nor could they get quit of their remorse till their priest had given them absolution" (pp. 51-52).

But the blame ought not to rest only upon those who dragged the reformers to the flames, and who mingled their songs of triumph with the groans of their miserable victims.

"There was something more personal, more deliberate, more coldly ferocious, in those clouds of monks who, issuing from all the convents of the order of Citeaux, spread themselves through the States of Europe, occupied all the pulpits, appealed to all the passions to convert them into one, and showed how every vice might be expiated by crime, how remorse might be expelled by the flames of their piles, how the soul, polluted with every shameful passion, might become pure and spotless by bathing in the blood of heretics."

Even after the conquest of the provinces had been accomplished, and peace granted to the submissive people, the monks continued in every church to preach a war of extermination, and each year impelled waves of new fanatics upon the miserable country.

The Count of Toulouse implored the Pope for absolution; the Pope referred him to a Council. The Council refused him permission to clear himself. When the Count, who felt assured that his innocence would be established, heard this unexpected verdict, he burst into tears.

"But Master Theodise remembered a passage of Holy Scripture by which to free himself from feelings of humanity. *How great soever be the overflow of waters, said he, turning his tears into derision, they will not reach unto God;* and he fulminated, in the name of the Church, an excommunication against the Count of Toulouse."

If there was any perfidy to be accomplished, an ecclesiastic was always found ready to undertake the part. When they arrived at Toulouse, Bishop Fouquet entered the city as a messenger of peace. "In order that I may, said he to the Count [De Montfort], make all the people come out to meet you, that you may seize and take them, which you could not do in the city." He advised his flock to apply by successive deputations to De Montfort, and "swore by the name of that God whom he was commissioned to preach to them, that his ardent charity alone dictated the advice which he had given for their welfare."

As the deputations arrived successively before De Montfort, he loaded them with chains. Fortunately, one of them escaped and gave the alarm to his fellow-citizens, who flew to arms. But the soldiers had already entered the city. "Directed by the bishop," says our historian, "they had already pillaged and plundered the greater part of the said city, and violated women and girls in such numbers that it was sad to see all the ill which the said bishop had done, in so short a time, to Toulouse." The sight of these abominable outrages provoked the citizens to such fury that they drove the Crusaders out of the

city with great slaughter. De Montfort, finding himself repulsed, threatened to put to death the prisoners he had already captured by treachery; and the bishop, with the Abbot of Saint Sernin, again entered the city as mediators. They took an oath that if the city surrendered, the Count would release their prisoners, and neither touch their persons nor their goods. By this time the people had lost all confidence in the promises and oaths of the bishop; but the critical situation of the city, the fearful danger of the hostages, "and more than all, the constant repugnance of the people to believe that the lords and priests would falsify their oaths, determined the Toulousians to submission." Then, when by delivering up their arms and fortresses, they had deprived themselves of all means of resistance, De Montfort put the principal citizens in irons and sent them, along with the prisoners he had promised to release, into the principal castles of the province, where they all perished, either by want or a violent death.

In 1219 the fanatical Prince Louis, son of Philip Augustus, took upon himself a new expedition against the Albigenses. At the siege of Marmand the besieged offered to surrender if their lives and baggage were spared. Louis told them they could go away, carrying only their bodies with them. Accepting this offer, they appeared at the tent of the king's son, to surrender themselves. But when the Bishop of Saintes saw the Count d'Astarrac and his knights enter the tent of Louis, he said: "Sire, my advice is that you immediately kill and burn all these people as heretics and apostates, and that none of them be left alive; and then that you do neither more nor less to those of the city." Louis demurred to this perfidious suggestion, and allowed d'Astarrac his liberty; but in the meanwhile Amaury De Montfort had entered into Marmand, "and had given command to execute the work which the Bishop of Saintes had recommended in order to procure the blessing of God upon their arms. All the inhabitants—men, women, and children—to the number of five thousand, were massacred."

Louis, after testifying some displeasure at the violation of his royal word, proceeded with the campaign.

In the end the reformers were utterly exterminated. The country, so beautiful, civilised, and flourishing, was laid waste with fire and sword. The Church triumphed. God was avenged. Sismondi lays the blame on the monks and priests. Yes; but priests and monks are governed by motives, the same as ordinary people. What was their motive? Protestant historians tell us that it was the lust for power and wealth; they are quite shocked at the idea that religion could impel them to commit such atrocities. But there is a fact recorded by Sismondi which throws a flood of light on the subject. It is as follows.

The Inquisition was introduced into the country to deal with any fresh cases of heresy which might arise, and to ferret out any heretics concealing their heresy. The headquarters, or supreme tribunal, was established at the Castle of Avignonet. This castle was surprised by the Albigenses, and four Dominicans, two Franciscans, and seven nuncios or familiars, who formed the supreme tribunal, fell into their hands. If lust for power, or wealth, or any earthly consideration had been their object they would have begged for mercy, or attempted to buy their liberty. They did nothing of the kind. Says Sismondi:—

"The monks, who had ordered so many murders, who had been insensible to the sorrows of so many families, awaited their murderers on their knees and singing the *Te Deum*, without endeavoring either to defend or save themselves. They already anticipated the enjoyment of the glory of the martyrs, so sincerely did they imagine themselves serving God when they bathed his altars with the blood of human victims."

Those who ask us to admire the faith which enabled the Christian martyrs to endure the scourge

and the stake forget that the same faith gave humane men the fortitude to gaze on and inflict the ultimate amount of torture that the human frame is capable of bearing; that the same religion bred the persecutor and the martyr; and whether he was one or the other was determined by the times in which he lived. The martyr who suffered when his beliefs were in the minority becomes the persecutor when his party attains to power. The martyr and the persecutor are opposite sides of the same medal.

Of course, we are dealing with times when people really believed in a future life, and that whether a man spent eternity in unending torture or eternal bliss depended entirely upon his religious belief. What wonder, then, that men who believed that heretics were leading souls to an eternity of torture should attempt to exterminate them. As Dean Milman observes of Peter, monk of Vaux-Vernay, the historian of this Crusade: "With him all wickedness is centred in heresy. The heretic is a beast of prey, to be slain wherever he may be found."* Such were the motives of the Crusaders.

We shall return to this subject in future articles, of which this is only a commencement.

W. MANN.

Christianity and Socialism.

FROM THE "TRUTHSEEKER" (NEW YORK).

If the Christian tells the story, the Christian Church abolished slavery, and is furthermore responsible for all the good there is in the world—good actions, good institutions, good thoughts, "good everything." Although it has never been the pioneer in any movement for the betterment of mankind, but always a clog and a hindrance to progress, the Christian Church has adopted all completed progressive movements, and hastened to claim any which bade fair to be great popular waves. The attempt, therefore, on the part of some of the clergy to make Socialism to be really another form of Christianity is readily explicable. The cuckoo is trying to steal another nest.

The matter we print this week on "Socialism and Christianity" is interesting reading. It shows plainly that the Socialists as well as the Christian clergy are becoming mixed in mind. With some of them it is evidently "good Lord, and good Devil;" who has got the votes? Mr. Lewis would try to dodge the question or tell the truth. So long as Socialism is a popular economic theory the clergy and their followers will butt in, bringing with them their superstition, which they will endeavor to graft upon the social scheme, as they have grafted it upon the democracy of our republic. The matter may as well be dealt with at once. "Comrade" Maynard, a woman, is full of words, with no ideas. "Cosmic Theism" is a mouth-filling phrase, but what does it mean? No dictionary that we possess, nor cyclopaedia nor commentary, will enlighten us. And why "superficial" Atheism? Will a descent to any depth reveal the ideal of the Theist?

Of course, Catholics cannot remain affiliated with their Church and act with the Socialists. Mr. Devine will ultimately find that out. And we do not believe that Mr. Robert Hunter will be able to keep the Socialist party secular. The Christians are too obtrusive, always desirous of thrusting their inconsequential other-world views upon their neighbors. Socialism is as yet the same sort of an ideal as the Christian heaven, and the two can be made to coalesce very readily. Talk to a Christian of the inequalities, miseries, and tyrannies of life, and he points you to heaven. Show a Socialist the improbability, not to say impossibility, of forming an altruistic society of the selfish, brutal, cruel, tyrannical, unfeeling, self-centred race of bipeds now living on the earth, and he will point you to Socialism, saying it will be all right then. Men will have no object in stealing and being selfish and tyrannical, and they will become perfectly kind, gentle, unselfish, altruistic. But ask if he ever knew a man to quit when he was gorged, and he will remain silent. When did Rockefeller stop accumulating?

The trouble is that Karl Marx sprang his dream of what evolution would firmly accomplish upon the world too soon, as did the Anarchists whose schemes we canvassed a few weeks since. They would all better have set themselves to righting the wrongs in the world than to describe heavens to distract the people. Imagination answers desire only to the confusion of the dreamer. As a political or economic scheme, Socialism lacks one imperative need of mankind. That is, a safeguard for liberty. It takes no note or care of

the minority. It provides nothing for them. It is a mob despotism. It grabs the earth as the capitalists it denounces have done, and those who do not want to be dominated by delegated bosses may go hang. The individual is nothing. He cannot be. As the Socialist scheme contemplates the control of all production and of all distribution, the individual has no place in it. A cog to a machine, like a convict marching in lock-step, he must have no will of his own, for there is no opportunity to use it.

But the world cannot exist part Socialist and part free. Men would fight then as now for ownership of natural utilities. A hundred bosses are a hundred times worse than one, and a mob despotism would be as cramping to liberty as the autocracy of the Czar.

But all that is aside from the point of interest, which is: Will the clergy control the Socialist vote? Socialism is a political philosophy well adapted for use by religious bigots. No government—no dream of government—can be more paternal than Socialism. If the Church gains control of the party, and some popular wave places the party in power, will we have a distinctly religious political party? That is something Messrs. Hunter and Hillquit, and the other leaders, should think about. The *Clarion* editors, as quoted by Mr. Foote, have reached the idiotically religious state already. Comrade Maynard, with her cosmic Theism to be bulwarked by Socialism, is not far behind them, and if such persons are to guide and govern the party's future it will be well for the Freethinkers in the party to come out before they are made tools to enslave themselves. Let not a dream be put ahead of the eternal verities. Liberty is the one thing worth striving for; without it, life is a flat failure. Enslavement to a religious ideal is the depth of intellectual degradation.

It Didn't Come Off.

ANGELIC WARNINGS.

From Our Own Correspondent.

NEW YORK, Sunday, June 14.

THROUGHOUT America enormous interest has been aroused by the mysterious case of Mrs. Anna Kiselcia, of Passaic, New Jersey, who says that a Heavenly angel appeared to her, and told her to be prepared to die by six o'clock this morning. She is a young woman, a widow, and a Greek Catholic. She talked like a refined and cultured Christian, and was strictly sensible on all points, except that she believed implicitly that the hour of her death to-day was foretold. Moreover, she had the gift of making a host of friends believe her.

Since Saturday week, when the alleged angel appeared, she had arranged all her affairs, ordered her coffin, and made her shroud. Then she went to the general hospital at Passaic, New Jersey, paid for a private room, and asked the doctors to attend her until six to-day, when she said they could certify her death. She declared that she would do herself no injury, but admittedly she wanted to be "called home," and see her husband in heaven. All last week photographs of Mrs. Kiselcia, a woman of delicate, spiritual, and rather attractive features, were published in the newspapers throughout the country, and reporters were in constant attendance at the hospital. To-day everybody asked, "I wonder if Mrs. Kiselcia is alive." No newspapers are printed here on Sunday to answer the question, and I therefore despatched a representative of *The Daily Telegraph* to Passaic, and have just talked with him over the long-distance telephone. He reported that there was an enormous crowd outside the hospital, and that he was not allowed to enter the patients' ward, because it was Sunday, but the hospital superintendent had assured him that the lady at that time (ten a.m.) was still alive, and had just eaten a remarkably good breakfast.

Unlike Baxter, the American "prophet," whose dates for the end of the world were always coming wrong, Mrs. Kiselcia does not say she blundered in her dates, and promptly adjourns the hour of her death, but says frankly and fairly that she must have been suffering from delusions. She says she is sorry to "break faith" with so many people who had trusted her, and henceforth she will be sceptical regarding alleged angelic warnings.

—Daily Telegraph.

STILL MORE MIRACULOUS.

"In choosing his men," said the Sabbath-school superintendent, "Gideon did not select those who laid aside their arms and threw themselves down to drink; he took those who watched with one eye and drank with the other."

* Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. v., p. 247.

The Sphinx.

BY HEINE.

Translated by James Thomson ("B. V.").

It is the ancient, haunted wood !
 The marvellous moonlight,
 The fragrance of the lindenblooms
 Enchant me with delight.

I further go, and all the air
 Is music as I go;
 It is the nightingale, she sings
 Of love and love's wild woe.

She sings of love and love's wild woe,
 Of laughters, tears, and sighs;
 So sad her glee, so glad her grief,
 Forgotten dreams arise.

I further go, and as I go
 I see before me there
 In open space a castle stand,
 The turrets high in air.

The windows closed—a mournfulness,
 A stillness that appals;
 As if Death held his silent court
 Within those gloomy walls.

Before the gate there lay a sphinx,
 Half terror and half grace;
 A lion's body, lion's claws,
 A woman's breasts and face.

A woman fair! The pale look spoke
 Of fierce desires and wiles;
 The dumb stone lips were wreathed and curled
 In most voluptuous smiles.

The nightingale so sweetly sang
 That I could not resist;
 I went and kissed the sweet, cold face,
 Self-ruined as I kissed.

The statue struggled into life,
 The tomb of stone was burst;
 She drank my ardent kisses in
 With fierce and panting thirst.

She drank my breath, she drank my soul,
 With amorous heat aflame;
 Embraced me with the lion-claws
 And rent my shuddering frame.

Ecstatic torture, blissful pangs!
 O joy and woe unmeasured!
 While still the sharp claws wounded me,
 The mouth's sweet kisses pleased.

The nightingale sang: "O fairest sphinx!
 O strange Love, how is this,
 That you must mingle deadly pain
 With all your highest bliss?"

O fairest Sphinx! vouchsafe me now
 This riddle to explain,
 For I through many thousand years
 Have pondered it in vain."

All this I might have said in good prose.....When one, however, reads again the old poems, to furbish them up for a new edition, one falls unawares into the jingling habitude of rhyme and prosody; and behold! it is with verse that I introduce this third edition of the *Book of Songs*. O Phoebus Apollo! if these verses are bad, thou wilt surely pardon me freely.....For thou art an omniscient god, and thou knowest right well wherefore since so many years I have been unable to devote myself chiefly to the rhythm and assonance of words.....Thou knowest wherefore the flame, which once delighted the world with brilliant fire-work phantasies, had suddenly to be applied to far more serious brands.....Thou knowest wherefore it now consumes my heart, a hidden fire.....Thou comprehendest me, mighty and beautiful god, for thou also dost sometimes exchange the golden lyre for the strong bow and deadly arrows..... And dost thou not still remember Marsyas, whom thou didst flay alive? That was long ago, and a similar example is now much needed.....Thou art smiling, O my eternal father!
 (Written at Paris, February 20, 1839.)

"CHARTERED LIBERTINES."

The sorriest exhibition at the farcical Pan-Anglican Congress was the spectacle of Canon Rawnsley unctuously denouncing the modern novel. Maybe, some novelists do

not always write with restraint and sobriety on matters relating to sex; but a parson is the last man in the world who should complain. The clergy themselves are far worse offenders than any mere novelists. They thrust the Bible into the hands of every child. And the most utterly shameless of the novels denounced by Canon Rawnsley is a comparatively innocent work when placed by the side of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is full of passages totally unfit to read aloud to an adult mixed congregation. And it is a crime to force such a work into the hands of little children. Detailed accounts of murder, incest, adultery, rape, sodomy, onanism, and unnatural vice occur in the Bible with remarkable frequency. Polygamy, slavery, wholesale violation, and indiscriminate massacre are not only mentioned, but have the Divine sanction. These and other truly awful horrors, mark you, are written in plain, unvarnished language which the least-lettered juvenile can understand. Is it possible to conceive of anything more disgusting and hypocritical? The majority of novel readers are, at least, grown up; and persons of full age are not so easily contaminated by badly-written novels as the clergy imagine. But the impressions of early childhood are indelible. And "God's Holy Book" is the one work which is compulsorily read in our schools, in order, say the clergy, that our little ones should be loving, kind, pure, and gentle.

Prevention of Crime.

The following resolution has been passed by the Criminal Law and Prison Reform Department of the Humanitarian League:—

"That this Committee, having regard to the dangerous and despotic powers bestowed on the prison authorities by the Home Secretary's Prevention of Crime Bill, urges on the Government that the Bill should be so amended as to provide (1) that only Judges of the High Court should be empowered to pass sentences of 'preventive detention'; (2) that the total period of such detention should not be more than ten years; (3) that the prisoners should be in the charge of a specially trained staff, who have had nothing to do with the infliction of prison punishments; and (4) that the Board which is to determine the fate of this class of prisoner should be independent of the Home Office and Scotland Yard."

Correspondence.

"REAL CHRISTIANITY."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me to point out a slight slip in your article, under the above title, which appeared in your issue of the 12th inst. In this it is stated that—"There is not a single article of belief on which they [Christians of all creeds] are all agreed."

There is, however, one article of practice on which there is absolute unanimity among Christians of every denomination, and this is crystallised in the text, "Now concerning the collection" (1st Corinthians xvi. 1).

E. B.

Iconoclasts' Cricket Club Sixth Match

V.

Mornington House Cricket Club.

RESULT: draw. Scores: I. C. C., 188 for 5 wickets (innings declared closed); Mornington House, 67 for 7 wickets. Rain curtailed play, otherwise the Iconoclasts would have gained an easy victory. Our opponents were outplayed in every department of the game. The chief features of the game were the fine hitting of Ford, who drove with tremendous power, and the bowling of C. Harvey, who took four wickets in four successive balls. Harvey joined our club through the announcements in the *Freethinker*. Many friends of the members were again present, including many ladies.

H. E. VOIGT, Captain I. C. C.

LEARNING EARLY.

A Sunday-school teacher had been telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. When she asked them what the story meant, a little boy said: "It means that when I am in trouble my neighbors must help me."

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 postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), 3.15, R. Rosetti, "The Pagan Origin of Christianity"; 6.15, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture.
 CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. Schaller. Brockwell Park, 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen.
 KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, F. Schaller, "Science versus the Bible."
 NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, W. J. Ramsey.
 WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, 7, Mr. Ford, "Peace, Perfect Peace."
 WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, a Lecture.
 WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S.: Beresford-square, 11.30, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Rationalists' Club, 12 Hill-square): Social meeting, Thursdays, at 8.15.

OUTDOOR.

BURY: Fair Ground, Tuesday, July 21, at 7.30, J. McLennan, a Lecture.
 EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 2.30, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture.
 LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S.: Corner of Shiel-road and Boaler-street, Thursday, July 16, at 8, Sidney Wollen, "His Satanic Majesty." Sunday, July 19, at 3, "Getting Right with God"; 7, "The Teachings and Example of Christ."
 ROCHDALE: Town Hall Square, Thursday, July 23, at 7.30, J. McLennan, a Lecture.
 WIGAN: Market Steps, Wednesday, July 22, at 7.30, J. McLennan, "God's Character."

H. S. WISHART'S LECTURES.

LEEDS: Friday, July 17, Town Hall Square, at 7.30, "The Growth of Christ."
 WIGAN: Sunday, July 19, Market Steps, at 11, "Thomas Paine, Hero and Pioneer"; 3, Gospel Reading—"Did Christ Teach Poverty?" 7, "Christianity's Surrender to Freethought."
 BRADFORD: Monday, July 20.
 NELSON: Tuesday, July 21, Secondary School Ground, at 7.30, "If Christ be not risen, then is your faith vain."
 BURNLEY: Wednesday, July 22, at 7.30, "The Fable of the Resurrection."
 WARRINGTON: Thursday, July 23, at 7.30, "Ballard's Despicable Treatment of Blatchford."

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