

Freethought Review.

SCIENCE. RELIGION. PHILOSOPHY.

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Blasphemy, it appears, is not within the bounds of the criminal law of New Zealand—"crimes against religion" not having been suggested as among the necessities or luxuries of a young community carving out homes in the wilderness. If the Codifiers were not mere copyists, they thought the time had arrived when the crimes in question should be added to the resources of civilisation, and that the new Code should equip the minions of the law with the means of suppressing irreverence dignified by the name of crime. The Freethought Conference, under the competent guidance of Mr. Stout, passed a resolution in favor of petitioning against the introduction of the "crime," and it would now seem to be the duty of Freethinkers to unite in defending the liberty they already possess, whether such liberty be due to an oversight or the generous impulses of legislators. There is no occasion for protecting religion by means of the criminal law. Ribald attacks on any form of religious confession only injure those who make them and give to theology the appearance of virtues it probably does not possess. No Freethinker allows his criticism in its severest form to degenerate into "indecent language." But it was well shown at the Conference that if the Code became law, the liberty of a Freethinker might some day be placed at the mercy of an orthodox and bigoted jury. A Christchurch newspaper, in criticising the action of the Conference, says the "crime" will be discussed from a *political* point of view when the Code is under consideration in Parliament. The meaning of this is not quite clear. It is a political axiom that the legislature should not unnecessarily create crime, and this is sufficient reason why it should not enact blasphemy.

Under the head of "Crimes against Religion" is the offence of assaulting ministers of Religion. "Every one is liable to two years' imprisonment with hard labor who—(1) By threat or force obstructs or prevents or endeavors to obstruct or prevent any clergyman or other minister of religion, in or from lawfully officiating in any church, chapel, meeting-house or other place of religious worship, or in or from the performance of his duty in the lawful burial of the dead in any churchyard or other burial-place; or (2) Strikes or offers any violence to, or arrest upon or under the pretence of executing any civil process, any clergyman or other minister of religion who is engaged in, or to the knowledge of the offender is about to engage in, any of the rites or duties mentioned in the last subsection, or in going to perform the same or returning from the performance thereof." There is a further clause entailing a penalty of forty pounds for "disturbing public worship." These clauses do not specially concern Freethinkers except as citizens careful to guard against abuses which affect the body politic. Now is this special legislation called for? A drunkard commits an ordinary assault on a citizen and

is summarily dealt with, but if he be guilty of the same offence against a clergyman he will be sent before a jury and be liable to two years with hard labor! Is there any reason for the distinction? In a country where there is no State Church priests are citizens and nothing more, or the State departs from its secular character. The foundation of all punitive laws is the protection of person and property, and the question arises in every act of legislation whether a suggested penalty is sufficient in a given case of infraction. The legislator is well aware that excessive punishment defeats its own ends, by creating sympathy for the criminal, through which his chances of escape are increased; and the penalty is made to err on the side of leniency rather than on that of severity, in order that the more effective deterrent of public reprobation may supplement the sentence. It may be said that the penalty is a maximum one, and that the judge has the discretionary power of apportioning the punishment to the nature of the offence. But it is the duty of the judge to keep in view the intentions of the legislature, and if for one offence a maximum penalty of three months imprisonment is provided, and for another two years, he will consider himself bound to recognise the distinction. It is moreover an abuse of terms to describe a common assault upon a clergyman as a "crime against religion," as it simply comes within the common category of an offence against society, and should be dealt with as such. It is best for all parties—clergymen, religion, and society at large—that the clause should be swept from the Code.

The taxation of church property is a question which will become more urgent as its merits are better appreciated by the electors generally. It is difficult to see why any property should not pay its fair share of either local or general taxation. If the property is much the owners are better able to pay; if it is little, the sacrifice will not be cruel. There are two reasons why church property should not be exempted. The first is that it receives the same protection and the same enhancement of value from the Government and the progress of society, as any other kind of property. The second is that the State, in exempting ecclesiastical property from taxation, is distinctly recognising religion, and wandering outside the secular sphere to which, in the colonies at least, it professes to confine itself. Freethinkers in some instances have claimed exemption for their own halls and places of meeting on the ground that they are a religious body. In one sense Freethought is a religious movement, and its claims to exemption are just as good as those of a theological sect; but that does not make the demand for exemption good in itself, and we think it not advisable or indeed justifiable to prefer an indefensible claim on the ground that others have obtained the same concession as that sought for. The best plan is to ask candidates for the Assembly whether they will agree to tax Church

property, and in this and other ways to put on the requisite political pressure to attain the object in view. There is another reason that occurs to us why property of this kind should be taxed. It nearly always happens that the property increases so much in value in the course of time that the Church is tempted to sell, and is thus enabled to amass wealth by a purely commercial transaction. Bills are frequently brought into the legislature to enable sites of churches to be sold, when no questions are asked if all the parties are agreed. Indeed it can hardly be denied that Church property is simply corporate property held on commercial principles and dealt with for the benefit of the corporation. The justice of taxing the article therefore appears to be maintainable.

The Premier has been imitating slightly the Oracle of Delphi on the subject of Education. He suggested a number of to him impracticable reforms or changes, but his object in pursuing this line of observation is not distinct. So far as we follow his oracular speech, we suppose the speaker to have meant that economy will be promoted in the only practical way by the adoption of a denominational system in towns. On one point the oracle was clear: the Premier is a denominationalist, expressing, however, only his own personal views on the question. But it must not be imagined that the town denominationalist is different from the denominationalist proper; the fact being that denominationalism is impossible in the country districts. We are led to the conclusion that the Sectarians want to control education where there is no trouble, but would throw the expense and responsibility of providing educational wants in the outlying districts on the Government. The Premier may now be accepted as the leader of the denominationalist party. So astute and cautious a politician must have supposed that the party was gaining in strength and would shortly be in the ascendant, or he would hardly have ventured to declare his opinions with so little reserve. It would be well that Freethinkers remember to ask some questions of candidates at the next election as to their opinions about denominationalism. They cannot afford to sleep when the First Minister of the Crown has expressed his hostility to the fundamental principle of the educational system.

Bishop Nevill has been preaching in Dunedin a series of sermons on questions of the day; the subject of the one before us, as reported in the 'Morning Herald,' being "Belief in Nature Examined." The title is somewhat curious, but is explained in the following terms:—"I mean to test the value as far as I can of that trust or confidence in the physical universe with its phenomena which we are so constantly exhorted to maintain as preferable to a similar trust or confidence in God." There is an assumption here without proof and gratuitous. The Atheist does not say he trusts in Nature. On the contrary he admits its imperfection and even argues from this against the existence of a Creator. The Bishop consequently does not state the Atheist's position, nor the Pantheist's. Referring to two "terms" in the physical universe, matter and force, the result of the ultimate analysis, Bishop Nevill asks:—"are they self-existent or originated?" To the question he replies with a happy sententious confidence as follows:—"If you say the latter, then there remains a God to believe in; but if the former then you substitute for the action of an intelligent being the

"operation of blind force." But as there is no evidence at all of an origin of matter or force, there is no evidence of the existence of a God. On the other hand the doctrine of the conservation of energy leads to the conclusion that matter and force never had an origin. The second alternative the Bishop uses to transfix the Atheist on the other horn of the dilemma. But there is no necessity to imagine a "blind force," that is, a force incapable of producing in matter all the forms of Nature. The force and matter had only to contain, not any form of intelligence, but the potentialities which produce Nature in all her forms. Of the essence of matter and force it is admitted we know nothing, as we can only realise phenomena, and until Bishop Nevill can give a complete definition of the terms, his predicate of a *tertium quid* or "God" is illogical. He says again—"carried up to the last analysis, you have not and cannot have any real, absolute knowledge of Nature at all, and therefore you cannot predicate anything about her or about yourself as part of her." This is simply nonsense, for it might be predicated that Bishop Nevill (a part of Nature) could have no absolute knowledge of the thing which he predicated was undeserving of trust and confidence!

The Bishop, after his proof that nature was originated by God, proceeds to show that Nature is not to be trusted, and gives conclusive reasons unconsciously for a distrust of God its creator, at the same time. He asks questions and supplies the answers:—"Then is she (Nature) always kind, always beneficent? Here a swollen river sweeps away the villages along its banks, making men homeless, children fatherless, wives widows. Here brave mariners have struggled with ocean billows through days and nights of howling storms, only to be engulfed at last. There over the dreary plain the scorching sun has pitilessly dried up every pool, absorbed every drop of moisture, and men and beast glare upon each other, drink blood, and die. The relentless hurricane devastates half a continent, or the awful cataclysm, amid fierce thunderings and hellish glares, and darkness that may be felt, swallows up a 100,000 fathers and mothers, and leaves, perhaps, their babes to die, unless—strange comparison!—the tidal wave should come and carry them away." Yet this God is supposed to have made this very Nature that engulphs "brave mariners!" The moral question may well be asked, Can we trust a Deity any more than Nature that is so merciless in his creations or originations? If a being endowed with the attributes of Bishop Nevill's God creates a machine which "swallows up 100,000 fathers and mothers, and leaves perhaps the babes to die," the moral responsibility attaches to the God and not to the machine. And just in proportion to the weight of the Bishop's argument, is the guilt of his Deity. For the same reason that an Atheist does not trust Nature, he could not believe in a God who is alleged to have made it so morally and physically imperfect. The Bishop's diatribe against Nature is really an indictment against its supposed author.

A London Artizan, in the 'Fortnightly Review' for January, concludes an article on "The Wives and Mothers of the Working Classes," in these words:—"Depend upon it, no cobbler enjoys making a good shoe as much as the cobbler whose friends in his leisure hours are Shakspeare and Milton; and no woman is likely to scrub a floor the worse or darn a stocking less neatly for having learned to love George Eliot and Longfellow."

Passing Notes.

Mr. Herbert Spencer writes to the 'London Athenæum,' complaining of the inexcusable misrepresentations made by the Duke of Argyll in criticising his (Spencer's) *Data of Ethics*. He says that the Duke, in his book entitled *The Unity of Nature*, puts in quotation-marks sentences which bear not even a remote resemblance to any sentence which he himself had used. Mr. Spencer asks if the Duke can contend that this course is defensible.

The bill now before the Massachusetts Legislature with reference to admitting the testimony of atheists in courts reads thus:—"Section seventeen of chapter one hundred and sixty-nine of the Public Statutes is hereby amended by striking out the following words: 'and the evidence of such person's disbelief in the existence of God may be received to affect his credibility as a witness.'" This amendment has already passed the Senate, and is likely to become law.

The Freethought Conference brought under review a question of the first importance when it passed a resolution in favor of a Bill being introduced in the Assembly to provide for the incorporation of Societies, such as the Freethought Federal Union and the Associations of which it consists. The Bill should be general in its scope so as to include all bodies desiring incorporation. It would inspire confidence if Mr Stout drafted a short measure of the kind and entrusted it to some competent member of the Legislature.

We have received a pamphlet on "Taxation of Church property" published by the Boston Free Religion Association, and issued by our indefatigable friend "Blue Pencil," who has caused a copy to be sent to each Freethought Association in New Zealand. The pamphlet describes the position of Church property in the United States and urges the danger of allowing it to accumulate in enormous quantities through its exemption from taxation. The action of our friend is opportune, the Associations of the Colony being about to move the Legislature to alter the law.

The Pope lately held a congregation of cardinals, whom he informed that he had consigned to the Secret Archives, for the information of posterity, a detailed account of his conversation with the Crown Prince of Germany. It would be only fair that the Prince should have been allowed to make his notes of the conversation to accompany the Pope's version into the Archives. For notwithstanding infallibility, the version of His Holiness will be a one-sided affair and posterity will only be impartially informed. Perhaps posterity will not so much care what either Pope or Prince said on the occasion.

According to the 'Italia,' the Mahdi is not so black as he is painted. It seems that a correspondent of that paper, a missionary who succeeded in escaping from Upper Egypt to Cairo, states that the False Prophet treats his prisoners remarkably well. They are lodged in tents and properly fed; and, when some sisters of charity and Catholic missionaries expressed some natural anxiety as to the fate of some one hundred and fifty children whom they had baptized and whose education they had been supervising, the Mahdi had the little converts brought into camp, and entrusted to the care of their masters and mistresses. If this information is correct, it will be possible to think better things of the fierce soldier of Islam who is causing such trouble in the Soudan.

The 'New Zealand Presbyterian' winds up an article on the "First Free Presbyterian Church of Otago" with the following remarks:—"The Presbyterian Church should be strong enough here to afford scope to the development of various types, without splitting or schism. If, however, they mean more than this, and intend creating another rival Presbyterian Church, of which distinctive principle shall be 'No Hymns,' they are perpetrating a most egregious blunder. They may drag on for a few years a wretched existence, but must surely perish from off the earth as

a withered leaf. A church with such sort of distinctive principle writes its own epitaph. What a reading of Christianity does that action imply! That men should thus unwittingly play into the hands of Popery, and make the Church the scorn of the infidel."

FREETHOUGHT CONFERENCE.

In continuation of the proceedings of the Conference, we give Mr. Stout's address on "Freethinkers in Relation to the State," as reported in the 'Otago Daily Times.' He understood the term "Freethought" to mean a person who could think freely on all religious subjects without starting first with a profession of belief. The Freethought Association had no creedal basis; members were admitted with differing views upon religious, political and social questions. There was no intention of founding a new religion, but the the object of the Association was to maintain individual liberty in the highest questions affecting the race. As members of the Association they are not Atheists, or Agnostics, or Christians, but simply men with different views met together to uphold the liberty to think as they pleased, and to express their opinions.—(Applause). The need of such an Association was shown in many ways. He needed not to allude to what was passing in other countries, and would simply draw attention to what was happening in this Colony as showing the need of such union as had been sketched being formed, if in New Zealand they were to maintain the religious liberty they had enjoyed in the past. The State might be looked upon as a kind of joint-stock company, based on what was termed contract—every person giving up a certain share of individual liberty and obtaining the benefits of law, authority, and peace, or as a growth, to obtain a correct idea of which it would be necessary to trace its history from the far-back Aryan family through all its developments to the present day. Whether the State was founded on the fanciful contract theory, or had come as a slow development, as the later and perhaps better writers maintained, at any rate it was recognised that the State had limited functions, and its sole object should be to promote the highest social and the highest individual life; and if they found any State interfering with religious freedom and individual liberty more than was absolutely necessary to maintain good order and peace among its citizens, they at once denominated that State tyrannical. The fact must not be overlooked that the State, like the individual, has bias. Although in New Zealand there was no State religion, yet the Old Land was obtruding itself in all kinds of ways. For example, not 20 years ago in Otago public meetings were opened with prayer, and school committee meetings had to be opened with prayer before they could proceed with the ordinary school committee work. The same bias still existed in Parliament, where, before an Impounding Ordinance or a Goat Nuisance Bill was considered, proceedings must be opened with prayer, though Cabinet meetings were not opened with prayer, and it was not considered necessary to begin with prayer a sitting of the Supreme Court when a man was tried for murder. Then the State system of education was to be Secular, but the school-books inculcated many lessons concerning the Christian religion, so that Freethinkers had a right to complain on that ground. He mentioned these things to show that they had brought to this Colony a bias in these matters. For on all sides it was admitted that the State had nothing to do with religion, and, in fact, the State could have nothing to do with religion unless it selected one religion and made that the established religion in the Colony. If it was not the duty of the State to look after the religious training of adults, it could not be its duty to look after the religious education of the young. A State religion in this Colony was unnecessary and impracticable, and therefore he submitted that the duty of the State in relation to religion was not to interfere with opinions, but to allow each man in the State to hold what opinions he pleased so long as he did not defame or slander his neighbour, or create a breach of the peace or a riot—that was, that so long as good order and peace was maintained,

the State had no right to interfere with the religious beliefs of the citizens. That was all that Freethinkers asked for, and surely they had a right to obtain it. He had been led to make these remarks in consequence of something that had been done by the New Zealand Parliament at its last session. A criminal code had been prepared by the Statutes Revision Commission, and had been copied almost entirely from the English criminal code. This code, he might say, created two or three new crimes in New Zealand. Section 135 was headed "Crimes against Religion," and according to it anyone was liable to a year's imprisonment who published any blasphemous libel, and whether it was a blasphemous libel or not was to be a question of fact—that was, that it would be left to be decided by the jury. Hitherto there had been no such thing as blasphemy in New Zealand, for the obvious reason that before there could be blasphemy there must be some religion recognised by the State. This was clear from the case of *Regina v. Gathercole*, in which Baron Alderson said: "The point is whether there is only a libel on the whole Roman Church generally, or on Stouton Nunnery. In the former case the defendant is entitled to an acquittal. . . . A person may, without being liable to prosecution for it, attack Judaism or Mohammedanism, or even any sect of the Christian religion save the established religion of the country; and the only reason why the latter is in a different situation from the others is because it is *the form established by law*, and is therefore a part of the constitution of the country. In like manner, and for the same reasons, any general attack on Christianity is the subject of criminal prosecution because Christianity is the established religion of the country. It might be said that in New Zealand a person charged would have the benefit of a jury, but he would undertake to say that if a Freethinker were prosecuted for blasphemy, the prosecutor would take good care that none but orthodox people should be on the jury. The proposed criminal code would create for the first time in this Colony what were called crimes against religion, and this of itself showed the need of watchfulness on the part of all who valued individual liberty. If a man acted wrongly to his neighbour he could be punished, whatever his religious or irreligious opinions might be; so that as the State could deal with questions of conduct or morality, and provide for public peace and order, there was no need to import into their legislation this question of religious opinions. He did not think the code had been introduced with the idea of favoring any one sect; it had been, like a great many other things, slavishly copied from the English Act. But if Parliament meant to maintain in the Colony true religious liberty, it would not allow to stand on the Statute-book such a thing as a crime against religion. He would propose, in order that the meeting of Freethinkers in conference assembled might protest against the creation of a new crime—"That in the opinion of this meeting of Freethinkers it is unwise, unjust, and unconstitutional to create what are termed crimes against religion in New Zealand, and this meeting protests against the passing of the clauses in the proposed criminal code which purport to create such a crime."

MR. R. RUTHERFORD seconded and spoke in support of the resolution.

MR. I. N. WATT also stated that he cordially agreed with the motion, which, on being put, was carried unanimously.

As in our lives, so in our studies, it is most becoming and most wise to temper gravity with cheerfulness, that the former may not imbue their minds with melancholy, nor the latter degenerate into licentiousness.—PLINY.

It is sometimes urged that to deny the immortality of the soul is to reduce man to the level of the beast, but it is forgotten that mankind are not quite on a level. Take the savage with lower jaw projecting far in advance, and compare him with Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, or Voltaire. Take the Papuan and Plato, Esquimaux and Confucius, and then ask whether it is possible to contend that all human beings have equal souls.—"Has Man a Soul?" by C. Bradlaugh.

THE CHRISTIAN BATTLE FIELD.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on Earth; I come not to send peace but a Sword." *St. Matthew XI. 34.*

There are some extraordinary contradictions in connection with the Christian faith; according to one testimony the advent of the founder of this wondrous creed, was heralded by Angels, who proclaimed "peace on Earth and good will towards men." But it appears to me that in this case as in the Charge at Balaclava "somebody blundered." In the earlier ages of civilisation it might have been right to say of the people:—

"Their's not to reason why;
Their's but to believe and die"—

and like the brave and devoted slaves—the gaudily attired human machines employed by crowned tyrants—to waste their blood and sweat for the aggrandizement of the privileged few. The spread of knowledge has however changed the state of things, and though humanity still suffers from innumerable woes, not the result of physical causes, but the direct products of ignorance and crime, the Pioneers of Freethought are continually asking "the reason why." The professed attitude of the Christian Church was for many generations aggressive, against paganism, ignorance and tyranny, at first; subsequently against Science, liberty and truth, but still aggressive. "Peace on earth and good-will towards men" was a myth. The sword, the dungeon, the stake were realities. Though to-day the church is not strong enough to wield the sword, nor to drag its victims to the stake or the headsman's block, the keys of the dungeon have not yet been entirely wrested from her hands, and the desire to persecute those with whom she differs is as strong as ever; but the Army of Progress is now the invading force, and Christianity has to stand on the defensive. Now and again she singles out some advanced picket from our ranks, on which to vent her wrath; as the post of honor is necessarily one of danger, our brave comrades have at times to suffer. The most recent examples of these are Messrs Foote, Ramsay, and Kemp, and though last not least, Charles Bradlaugh.

While on one hand we mark the ferocious spirit displayed by the disciples of this "religion of love," it is also well to observe how the professed defenders of Christianity are compelled ever and anon to make concessions to the spirit of the age. In the same issue of a local paper—the 'Star' of March 12th—I read news from both camps. The Freethinkers of New England, U.S.A., are reported to have formed an Association with the following ends in view: "that Churches be not exempt from taxation, that judicial oaths be abolished, that all laws enforcing the observance of the Sabbath and Christian morality (?) be repealed, the Bible removed from public schools, and government aid refused to sectarian teaching." If this report be true our American brethren have sketched out a tolerably broad programme, sufficiently comprehensive and aggressive to meet the views, I should think, of the most advanced Freethinker. My attention was next drawn to the following facts which I summarize from a paragraph in the paper named. At a meeting of clergymen and Sunday-school teachers presided over by an Archdeacon, a minister of the Church read a paper "on the best method of making Sunday-school work effective."—"He advocated teaching children as little of the dogmas of religion as possible, and the inculcation of the more important principles of Christianity"—whatever that may mean—in the minds of the children as being the best means of training them for an age when there was so much *questioning and scepticism* (the italics are mine). He also advocated the improvement of Sunday-school buildings in country parishes; where, we may presume, ornamentation is not too abundant; and further suggests the "making of children's services as bright as possible," which in my opinion will necessitate the elimination of the terrors of Hell. A discussion followed as a matter of course, and it was finally resolved that the editor of the 'Church News' be requested to publish the essay in question. The next column to which I turned contained a brief report of the Freethought Convention sitting at Dunedin, who passed a resolution sympathising

with Charles Bradlaugh; thus we see, war between science and priestcraft is continually going on, and the weakness of our opponents displays itself in their spasmodic struggles for the supremacy ending in concession. In the meantime, foremost in the van stands the stalwart figure of Charles Bradlaugh; abused, insulted, belied, "stormed at with shot and shell," he still shows a bold front to the enemy, and justly does he deserve our sympathy and help. To his friends and admirers I dedicate the following lines:—

DARE TO HAVE A PURPOSE.

Tune—Moody and Sankey's Collection, No 7.

Faithful to his promise true,
In form and presence grand,
Defying all his foes can do,
See our hero stand.

Hail! Hail to Bradlaugh, standing there alone,
Who dares to have a purpose, and dares to make it known.

Free to the air our banners toss,
For justice boldly stand,
And brave the champions of the cross
By joining Bradlaugh's band.

Shout, huzza for Bradlaugh, standing there alone,
Who owns no god but Justice, and dares to make it known.

Priests and courtiers, great and small,
Who lord it o'er the land,
Now perched on high will surely fall,
When met by Bradlaugh's band.

Shout, huzza for Bradlaugh, who dares to stand alone;
Who owns no god but Justice, and dares to make it known.

With Watts and Aveling, Symes and Moss,
And Saladin the grand,
And gallant Foote and Ramsay,
We'll shout for Bradlaugh's band.

Hail! hail to Bradlaugh, he shall not stand alone
We'll hold aloft his banner, and proudly make it known.

CHARLES J. RAE.

Notes & Queries.

ANSWERS.

PLURALITY OF WORLDS.

In answer to query in your April number, "What position does science occupy with regard to the idea of a plurality of worlds, and what are the most recent authorities available?" with your permission I will state my position. Being an admirer of the scientists I am anxious to answer your correspondent, and tell him what they think of a question that is scouted with scorn by all the orthodox; because on the truth of the plurality of worlds becoming universally known their system or various systems or schemes that they have invented must fall to pieces. It is true the Bible is dead against us; but as many statements that have been made by the writers of that Book have been examined and found incorrect, or rather untrue, the statement made by it, or words to the effect that this world of ours is the only humanly inhabited one, may be examined as to the truth. In order that this paper may be within the limits allowed, your correspondent must grant that time and space are eternal, that space is filled with matter, and that the extent of that matter extends to eternal space in every direction. This can easily be demonstrated, but not in this answer. We find ourselves an odd number from our sun or stars—there is nothing whatever about our world to show that it is more highly favoured than others. Human pride and human ignorance have given it a place it does not possess. In the economy of Nature other worlds are more highly favoured than we are; one of them (I am speaking of our own system at present) has perpetual spring; two of them have trains of moons attending them, besides other appendages that we are denied; two of them have more light and heat than we have; and any of them are not in want of anything we possess. The sun himself may be, and probably is, teeming with intelligent inhabitants, physically adapted for their existence. The idea that the sun is a ball of fire or burning hydrogen gas excludes the idea of being inhabited; but when we consider that the sun cannot, and does not, emit any heat to us unless his rays are received direct into our dense atmosphere, and that there is nothing but

eternal ice and snow on our high mountain tops, although basking in the summer sun, he may not be the burning body that we have been taught he is, but that our own atmosphere has as much to do in the production of heat and light as he has. The same may be said of the moon. We meet light here in every circumstance—in the water and out of it, in the earth, without light, heat, or atmosphere; but I do not think the moon is inhabited—I think she is a dead moon at present. But that she may yet be provided with an atmosphere which will create life on her surface is probable. With our own planets the case is different. Take Venus or Mars, for instance, our nearest neighbours on either side. Our sister Venus has a striking family likeness to us, her appearance, her weight, her size, her atmosphere, her seasons, her mountains and seas, and everything that has been observed being exactly the same as ourselves, with the exception that her year is 224 days and she has no moon accompanying her. Mars is 5000 miles in diameter, he revolves within 40 minutes of the time that we do, his axis is inclined only a little more than ours, he possesses the same circumstances to maintain life that we do. This is still further confirmed by the two brilliant patches of ice and snow at his poles. Permanent markings and conspicuous diversity of colour clearly mark the presence of continents and seas on his surface. From his always ruddy appearance the soil would seem to consist of red sandstone. The seas have a greenish tint, but owing to a preponderance of land we always see Mars a ruddy colour. When we walk abroad on a clear starlight night and direct our view to the aspect of the heavens, there are certain reflections which will present themselves. Are those resplendent globes the dwellings of intelligent beings? The telescope fails to tell us. But modern discovery has collected together a mass of facts connected with the positions and motion, the physical character and conditions forming a body of analogies the most convincing. All the planets roll in regulated periods round the sun; provisions in all respects similar—similarly built, ventilated, warmed, illuminated and furnished, supplied with the same alternation of day and night, light and darkness, summer and winter; the same diversity of climates, the same agreeable distribution of land and water." The other stars being at such an immense distance from us, it is impossible to detect the worlds revolving round them, but as our sun differs little from the other stars the analogy or presumption is that all suns or stars have bodies revolving round them; that such bodies are provided with intelligent beings; and that such bodies extend to eternal space in every direction. Flammarion is the latest authority on this subject, but I have not seen his book.—AN AGNOSTIC. Greymouth, April, 1884.

Healthy Notes.

TREATMENT OF BURNS.

What is wanted as a dressing for burns is something which will preserve the skin and hold it intact until the new one has formed; that is, usually less than one week. After experimenting with a large number of substances, I am convinced that there is nothing equal to what I have recommended several times, and which I here repeat—the covering of the burn with the mixture of equal parts of the white of egg and sweet oil thoroughly beaten together. If the skin is broken or displaced, it should be carefully brought to its original position, and if there is vesication, the serum should be removed by puncturing with a fine needle and applying gentle pressure; then the parts should be freely covered with this mixture, which forms a kind of paste, and, to give greater security, strips of fine muslin or gauze may be laid over the wound. This should not be removed till the new cuticle has fully formed and become sufficiently firm to bear exposure to the air. If further vesication takes place under the dressing, the serum should again be removed, as also only pus, if it should form, and then more of the dressing should be applied. If, through motion or other cause, the wound becomes exposed—and daily care is required to avoid this—more of the

mixture should be promptly applied. The dressing should completely cover and even extend beyond the part injured, and generally by the third day the edges may be trimmed off with scissors, and by from the sixth to the tenth day the whole dressing can be removed, leaving a perfectly formed cuticle without blemish or scar. I can speak with great confidence of this treatment, for, after an experience of more than twenty years with it, in a large number of cases, I have never been disappointed in its results.—DR. I. T. TALBOT, in *N. E. Medical Gazette*.

HOT MILK AS A RESTORATIVE.

MILK that is heated to much above 100° Fahr. loses, for the time, a degree of its sweetness and density; but no one fatigued by over-exertion of body or mind who has ever experienced the reviving influence of a tumbler of this beverage as hot as it can be sipped, will willingly forego a resort to it because of its having been rendered somewhat less acceptable to the palate. The promptness with which its cordial influence is felt is indeed surprising. Some portions seem to be digested and appropriated almost immediately; and many who fancy that they need alcoholic stimulants when exhausted by labor of brain or body, will find in this simple draught an equivalent that will be as abundantly satisfying and more enduring in its effects.—*Louisville Medical News*.

Progress.

CANTERBURY FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

We have to thank the Secretary of the above Association (Mr. F. C. Hall) for the following items:—

Christchurch, April 19th, 1884.

SIR,—Besides discussions, music, and recitations, we have been favored with the following lectures since my last:—Mr. Biltcliff on "Force and Matter;" Mr. Thomas Williams, on "Some reminiscences," illustrated by a Panorama; Mr. Maclean, on "What is Religion;" Mr. Biltcliff, a "Reply to Rev Green's Lecture on Freethought." Our Lyceum is prospering, and children and teachers work well together. I think these children when they grow up will be unwilling to pay people for telling them the old, old story.

The Christchurch Papers have been ridiculing the Salvation Army doings here. The white neckties are getting quite cross at seeing their incomes fall off through General Booth cutting down the price, and retailing blood and hell at million prices. To my mind the Army is doing some good in shifting peoples' ideas and causing religion and respectability each to stand on its own bottom.

A Christchurch shoemaker advertises:—"Soles mended while you wait." I don't know why, but this gave me the idea of death-bed conversions.

Sir William Fox lectured here on Freethinkers, and got about ten times more hearers than if he had advertised to lecture on Christians. I believe he was not so cold-blooded in his expressions as that follower of the meek and lowly Jesus—the Rev. Gillies.

Mr. Charles Bright arrived here from Dunedin on the 14th instant and was met by several members of our Association. Mr. Bright will lecture at the Freethought Hall on Sunday (20th) Monday and Tuesday next.

Does it not strike your readers that if religion alone can teach morals the Christians, after all, don't particularly strive in morality.

Yours faithfully,

F. C. Hall,
Secretary, C.F.A.

AUCKLAND RATIONALISTIC SOCIETY.

Mr. W. C. Dewes, the Hon. Secretary, kindly sends us the following:—

Auckland, April 20, 1884.

SIR,—Since the last report made by our former Secretary, we have been steadily progressing, and now the Association numbers 139 members. So far we have depended entirely upon local assistance for our Sunday evening lectures and readings, in spite of which we have almost uniformly filled the Lorne Street Hall, which holds some 400 or 500, with an apparently interested and friendly body of people. We are organising a choir to furnish us with music in the shape of glees, &c., which when perfected will no doubt add very much to the pleasure of Sunday evening meetings. Our discussion class is fairly attended, but up to the present we have done little or nothing in the way of Sunday school business. We are waiting for information as to the best method of procedure—perhaps you can kindly give us a hint or two? At a

meeting of the Association last Sunday, a resolution of thanks was passed to "Blue Pencil" for a number of valuable pamphlets. We are expecting Mr. Charles Bright to give two week-day and one Sunday lecture in the course of about three weeks. Trusting to have some interesting communication for your next number,

I am, &c.,

W. C. DEWES,
Hon. Secretary.

WAVERLEY FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

We have received the following from the Secretary of this Association:—

Waverley, April 23rd, 1884.

SIR,—I wrote you last month that arrangements had been made for holding a meeting for the purpose of establishing a Freethought Association at Waverley. I am pleased now to be able to state that the movement has been successful. The first meeting formed themselves into a committee to obtain information, and report to a public meeting on the 13th. This they did, when it was decided to organise a Society at once. Mr. W. Symes was elected President, and Messrs Mason and Winchcomb Vice-Presidents, the former to act as Secretary and Treasurer. A committee of seven was also elected, and they were empowered to prepare a constitution and by-laws, to be submitted to a general meeting on Sunday, the 20th instant. It was also decided to ask Mr. Ballance, of Wanganui, to give an address on that date. On Sunday, the 20th, the meeting was well attended, over 30 persons being present. The President took the chair, and in a few appropriate words introduced Mr. Ballance, who was present in consequence of an invitation from the Society. The subject chosen by the speaker was the "Methods and objects of Freethought," and it is hardly necessary for me to say that in his hands full justice was done to the subject. The audience were attentive and appreciative, as they frequently evinced during the address, which occupied an hour and a quarter. At the conclusion, the President moved a hearty vote of thanks, which was warmly responded to. The committee then brought down their report, recommending the constitution and by-laws that appeared in the November number of the Review, with slight alterations to suit circumstances. These were adopted by the members, and the Association may now be considered fairly launched. Seeing that our members are very much scattered we intend starting a fund for the purpose of providing a library, independent of the subscription to the Association, which has been fixed at 2s 6d per quarter, payable in advance. By this means we shall be in a position to procure a number of books immediately. Meetings of the members will be held on every Sunday at 3 p.m. On behalf of the Association I have much pleasure in acknowledging a number of papers and a pamphlet from "Blue Pencil." Among the papers, a late number of the Bee Journal was present, and we have been speculating as to the meaning intended to be conveyed by the donor. Does he hope we shall be as busy as that valuable insect? Or does he suppose that those interesting themselves in the Freethought movement are generally interested in scientific matters? If the latter he has certainly hit the right nail on the head, as a number of our members are already engaged in this interesting study, and bee culture will probably be an industry of some importance in this district. Hoping that other districts will follow our example and organise, and that the movement will still flourish,

I remain, yours truly,

H. F. MASON,
Hon. Secretary.

WOODVILLE FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary furnishes the following report for the past month:—

Woodville, April 25th, 1884.

SIR,—Since last writing you the reverend gentlemen of the district have been respectfully invited to come and address us with view to a debate, but up to the present none have accepted. On Good Friday an entertainment was given at the Methodist Church, and it was advertised that no charge would be made, but a good collection was expected! One speaker attributed the "cause" of Freethinkers' existence to their slight knowledge of the Bible, and as an example spoke of a "Freethinker" who had asked him the simple question, From whom was Cain's wife descended? while had he only read his Bible he would have known that Adam lived 800 years after, and had sons and daughters, and consequently, Mr. Editor, must have married his own sister. There were a good few Freethinkers present, and notes were taken of the different speeches made, which gave us plenty to discuss at our meeting on the following Sunday; also to issue polite invitations to three prominent speakers to come and explain themselves, and show us our error, but up to the present they have not accepted.

Last Sunday we went to Pahiatua, about 14 miles away, and our President gave the residents there the benefit of his address, entitled, "Past, present, and Future," which appeared to be appreciated. We had a most enjoyable day, for some of the members hired a coach, and one wicked man took his camera, and obtained a group to celebrate the inauguration of Freethought into the Pahiatua district.

Yours truly,

CHAS. A. BEVAN,
Hon. Secretary W.F.A.

WANGANUI FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

We have received from Mr. Buckrell, the Secretary, an account of the doings of the Association for the month just past:—

Wanganui, April 26th, 1884.

SIR,—I have great pleasure in reporting the first social gathering in connexion with our Association, which took place in the shape of a tea meeting and concert on the 23rd April, in commemoration of Shakspeare's birthday. The tables were provided by ladies of the Association, who spared neither trouble nor expense to make their part of the entertainment successful, and their efforts were rewarded by the attendance of a very large gathering. The "good things" were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone, Appreciation seemed stamped upon the countenances of old and young. The concert was just as successful as the tea meeting, and too much praise cannot be bestowed upon those ladies and gentlemen, members and non-members, who so kindly and ably gave their services.

I have received a report of the proceedings of the Council of the New Zealand Freethought Federal Union. Amongst the resolutions passed by the Council to be submitted to the various Associations in New Zealand, I notice one protesting against the passing of certain clauses in the proposed criminal code for New Zealand, which purports to create what are termed crimes against religion. Of all present questions that concerns Freethought in this colony I hold this is the greatest, for it aims at the freedom of a portion of the deep-thinking and most intellectual of its people. It is essential that all the Associations should at once look this great difficulty in the face, and use every fair and legitimate means to avert what can only be looked upon as a great danger.

I am pleased to see an Association formed in Waverley, which promises to be a large and influential organisation. I know several of the leading spirits by reputation, and can congratulate the Waverley Freethought Association upon possessing such able men.

I take this opportunity of calling upon all those living in country districts who are interested in Freethought to attach themselves to the nearest Association, in order to strengthen those that already exist. I shall be most happy to supply, on application, any information that may be required as to the mode of initiation, &c., used by the Wanganui Association.

I remain, yours faithfully,

J. J. BUCKRELL,

Secretary Wanganui Freethought Association.

Science Notes.

THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF HUMAN BODIES.—M. Aimée Girard having lately proposed at the Académie des Sciences the destruction of the bodies of animals dying of virulent diseases by means of sulphuric acid (as their interment does not always secure from the danger they may cause), M. Régnard resolved to try the effect of this substance on the human subject. His experiments with the bodies of new-born infants and fetuses have been completely successful, and would no doubt be equally so if tried on the adult. To the body of an infant he adds about double its weight of the sulphuric acid of commerce, and after 24 or 30 hours of maceration, not a vestige of the body remained—the decomposition having taken place silently and without any smell. Neither the microscope nor the test-tube can detect the slightest trace of the body, beyond the presence of some fat, phosphoric acid and nitrogen.

Dr. Angus Smith's recent researches have led to the discovery, that in all natural waters sugar ferments, and hydrogen gas is given off. The proportion of hydrogen given off varies with the organic impurity of the water, from the mountain stream, to the worst sewage; so that the proportion of hydrogen evolved, appears likely to prove a quantitative test of the activity or virulence of the microbes present in the water.

The Boston and Albany Railroad is building a compound goods locomotive, with two large and two small cylinders, thus initiating an entirely new departure in the construction of railway engines.

G. J. Romanes recently delivered a lecture on "Instinct" to the members of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, in which, after defining the difference between acts properly called instinctive, and those due to reflex, muscular, or nervous motions, and also those intelligently directed, he dwelt upon the two causes to which instinct is to be attributed—namely, lapse of intelligence in actions originating intelligently and becoming by repetition automatic; and natural selection, these two causes acting frequently in combination.

He also dwelt on the plasticity of instinct, and instanced the case of the dog—the spirit of fierceness and self-reliance of the wild dog has been changed by domestication to docility and faithfulness, and a sense of dependence upon his master; and in addition new instincts have been developed, such as pointing, retrieving, sheep tending, and guarding property, all of which are strongly inherited.

Herr Poetsch has invented a method of sinking shafts in watery running ground, by first freezing the water, and then working the frozen mass out by hand. The wet ground is frozen by placing pipes in bore holes; and then passing through them a solution of the Chlorides of Magnesium, and Calcuim, which reduces the temperature to about 35° c.

The "Gesundheit" discussing the resistance of disease germs to disinfectants, remarks that it is extremely probable, that the disease germ of small-pox is present in the form of bacilli in the fluid, which is the principal bearer of the infection—the lymph removed from the pustules. The degree of vitality of the bacilli, varies in the different kinds of lymph; the lymph from cow-pox losing its capability for infection much more readily than the so called human lymph.

During the gales in England of the 26th and 27th of January, unprecedented wind pressures were experienced at the Forth Bridge Works. According to Mr. B. Baker, M.J.C.E., the strongest gusts gave a momentary pressure of 35½ lbs. per square foot on the large board 300 square feet; and of not less than 65 lbs. per square foot on the small board containing 1½ square feet.

THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

Hudson Tuttil, in 'The Index,' writes:—The religion of the future will accept and embody the truths of all systems. In doing so, it will not inquire its source, for truth bears the impress of no man's ownership or personality. To it, Jesus in his manger, Mohammed on his camel in the desert, or wisest monarch on his throne, are the same. This religion will be the science of life here and hereafter; and, as man is bound to the universe as an integral part, his understanding of the laws of the world will be its basis. It will teach the infinite possibilities of man, and his duty to cultivate these to the utmost.

The man who professes the religion of the future will accept nature as his Bible, and regard all books as valuable only for the truth they express. He will have no fear of offending God, but will fear to become out of harmony with the laws of his own constitution. His theology will be anthropology, the study of himself; the only devil will be ignorance; his faith will become ripened knowledge, and he will repose implicit confidence in the laws of the world.

Infallible authority of books or castes, reverence for antiquity, miracles, faiths, dogmas, saints, martyrs, popes, priests, fear of angry gods, all the trappings that have been received as divine, holy, sacred, will perish before the keen flame of knowledge, and no more blight the expanding spirit for ever. The old religions with their hollow shams shall perish; but morality, the growth of intelligence, freed from gross and perverting idolatry, will achieve a nobility of character unknown before.

While all preceding religions have developed a priesthood, superstitions, bigotry, persecutions, arrogance of infallibility, and fostered ignorance, selfishness, and servile fear of a terrible, relentless God and his vicegerents, this will yield nobility of life, highest ideals of perfection, calm reliance in the presence of omnipotent forces, all-embracing charity and philanthropy, an earnest and successful endeavour to actualize the ideal perfect life to which man aspires, and which his organisation makes possible.

The Salvation Army of Denver, Col., paid its respects to Col. "Bob" Ingersoll in a body, and exhorted him to repent ere it is too late. The Colonel listened to them philosophically, puffing away at his cigar and making the smoke curl as he blew it into the air. After they had finished, he told them that he would consider what they had told him, but couldn't promise to accept their views.

Wendell Phillips, besides being a great orator, was a noted wit. His death revived the following story, which was always good, and seems to grow better with each repetition: As Mr. Phillips was journeying over the New York Central, a rather pompous clergyman approaching him asked, "What is your aim in life?" To which Mr. Phillips bluntly replied, "To benefit the negro." "Why don't you go South, then, and do it?" inquired the Rev. gentleman. "Well, that is worth thinking about," answered Mr Phillips, "But," continued he, "I notice that you wear a rather white neck-tie; I would like to ask what is your aim in life?" "To save souls from hell," was the answer. "Well, then, why don't you go to hell and do it?" asked Mr Phillips, but he received no answer. His clerical friend went into another car.

The 'Boston Investigator' gives an account of the unveiling a statue to Harriet Martineau at the Old South, Boston, in the last week in the year. The statue is of heroic size, and represents Miss Martineau in a sitting posture, with one foot just visible resting on a hassock. The name of the sculptor is Miss Whitney. Speeches were delivered by Mrs Mary Livermore, Wendell Phillips and the son of the late Wm. Lloyd Garrison. Wendell Phillips—"the silver-tongued Demosthenes"—speaking of the opposition Harriet Martineau encountered on the Slavery question, said that "in spite of all, she sought out the Abolitionists and expressed a desire to attend a meeting to be held. They could not hold it in a public hall. There was no church or hall open to them. The only place—veil your faces, Christians!—the only one that in those days was open to the Abolitionists, was hired by Infidels, and over which they had control. But the infidelity of that day is the Christianity of this." (Applause) The hall referred to was the Julian Hall, occupied for lecturing by Abner Kneeland, who edited the Investigator 50 years ago.

"It is time that this ill-suppressed murmur of all thoughtful men against the famine of our churches; this moaning of the heart because it is bereaved of the consolation, the hope, the grandeur, that come alone out of the cultivation of the moral nature; should be heard through the sleep of indolence, and over the din of routine. This great and perpetual office of the preacher is not discharged. Preaching is the expression of the moral sentiment in application to the duties of life. In how many churches, by how many prophets, tell me is man made sensible that he is an infinite Soul; that the earth and heavens are passing into his mind; that he is drinking for ever the soul of God? The faith should blend with the light of rising and of setting suns, with the flying cloud, the singing bird, and the breath of flowers. But now the priest's Sabbath has lost the splendour of nature; it is unlovely; we are glad when it is done; we can make, we do make, even sitting in our pews, a far better, holier, sweeter, for ourselves."—EMERSON.

As yet the New Learning, though scared by Luther's intemperate language, had steadily backed him in the struggle. Erasmus pleaded for him with the emperor; Ulrich von Hutten attacked the friars in satires and invectives as violent as his own. But the temper of the Revival was even more antagonistic to the temper of Luther than that of Rome itself. From the golden dream of a new age, wrought peacefully and purely by the slow progress of intelligence, the growth of letters, the development of human virtue, the Reformer of Wittenberg turned away in horror. He had little or no sympathy with the new culture. He despised reason as heartily as any Papal dogmatist could despise it. He hated the very thought of toleration or comprehension. He had been driven by a moral and intellectual compulsion to declare the Roman system a false one, but it was only to replace it by another system of doctrine just as elaborate and claiming precisely the same infallibility. To degrade human nature was to attack the very base of the New Learning; but Erasmus no sooner advanced to its defence than Luther declared man to be utterly enslaved by original sin and incapable through any efforts of his own of discovering truth or arriving at goodness."—Green's Short History of the English People.

I never yet heard man or woman much abused, that I was not much inclined to think the better of them; and to transfer any suspicion or dislike to the person who appeared to take delight in pointing out the defects of a fellow-creature.—[Jane Porter.

ANTIQUITY OF FREEDOM.

Here are old trees, tall oaks and gnarled pines,
That stream with gray-green mosses; here the ground
Was never trenched by spade; and flowers spring up
Unsnown, and die ungathered. It is sweet
To linger here, among the fitting birds,
And leaping squirrels, wandering brooks and winds
That shake the leaves, and scatter, as they pass,
A fragrance from the cedars, thickly set
With pale blue berries. In these peaceful shades,—
Peaceful, unpruned, immesurably old,—
My thoughts go up to the long dim path of years,
Back to the earliest days of Liberty.

O FREEDOM! thou art not as poets dream,
A fair young girl, with light and delicate limbs,
And wavy tresses gushing from the cap
With which the Roman master crowned his slave
When he took off the gyves. A bearded man,
Aimed to the teeth, art thou; one mailed hand
Grasps the broad shield, and one the sword; thy brow,
Glorious in beauty though it be, is scarred
With tokens of old wars; thy massive limbs
Are strong with struggling. Power at thee has launched
His bolts, and with his lightnings smitten thee;
They could not quench the life thou hast from heaven.
Merciless power has dug thy dungeon deep,
And his swart armourers, by a thousand fires,
Have forged thy chain; yet, while he deems thee bound,
The links are shivered, and the prison walls
Fall outward; terribly thou springest forth,
As springs the flame above a burning pile,
And shoutest to the nations, who return
Thy shoutings, while the pale oppressor flies.

Thy birthright was not given by human hands;
Thou wert twin-born with man. In pleasant fields,
While yet our race was few, thou sat'st with him,
To tend the quiet flock and watch the stars,
And teach the reed to utter simple airs.
Thou by his side, amid the tangled wood,
Didst war upon the panther and the wolf,
His only foes; and thou with him didst draw
The earliest furrows on the mountain side,
Soft with the deluge. Tyranny himself,
Thy enemy, although of reverend look,
Hoary with many years, and far obeyed,
Is later born than thou; and as he meets
The grave defiance of thine elder eye,
The usurper trembles in his fastnesses.

Oh! not yet!
May'st thou unbrace thy corslet, nor lay by
Thy sword; nor yet, O Freedom! close thy lids
In slumber; for thine enemy never sleeps,
And thou must watch and combat till the day
Of the new earth and heaven. But wouldst thou rest
Awhile from tumult and the frauds of men,
Those old and friendly solitudes invite
Thy visit. They, while yet the forest trees
Were young upon the unviolated earth,
And yet the moss-stains on the rock were new,
Beheld thy glorious childhood, and rejoiced.—Bryant.

NAMES OF FREETHINKERS IN THE CALENDAR FOR MAY.

2. Friday—Joan Bocher, burned, 1550.
3. Saturday—R. Cooper, died, 1868. Mandeveld burned for denying Christ, 1539.
4. Sunday—William Kingdom Clifford, born, 1845.
8. Thursday—J. S. Mill, died, 1873.
10. Saturday—Tingot, born, 1727.
12. Monday—Saint Simon, died, 1825.
13. Tuesday—T. Cooper, died, 1839.
14. Wednesday—R. Owen, born, 1771.
15. Thursday—T. Taylor, born, 1758.
16. Friday—Socinius, died, 1562.
19. Monday—J. G. Fichte, born, 1762.
20. Tuesday—J. S. Mill, born, 1806.
21. Wednesday—Plato, born, B.C., 429.
23. Friday—Savanarola, burned, 1498. Copernicus, died, 1543.
25. Sunday—R. W. Emerson, born, 1803.
27. Tuesday—Dante, 1269.
29. Thursday—H. T. Buckle, died, 1862.
30. Friday—Voltaire, died, 1778.

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	S. Schulhof		

Pending further arrangements, F. C. Hall Esq., the Secretary of the Christchurch Freethought Association, has kindly undertaken to take charge of and distribute THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW in Christchurch.

Those willing to undertake the agency for places not named are requested to communicate at once with the publisher.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W.D.—Our correspondent sends us a clipping from the New Zealand Herald, in which a writer signing himself “Index” asserts that the Dunedin Freethought Association have “dismissed their Secretary for the offence of exercising his freedom of thought. In an unguarded moment this gentleman not only thought, but expressed, some thoughts which were not the thoughts of the Association to which he belonged.” This will be news indeed to the Dunedin Association, to the Secretary of which we have forwarded the extract. The part which deals with the object of Freethought is crude and absurd as to be unworthy of notice. We shall always be glad, however, to receive statements of fact regarding Freethinkers so that we may be able to repel attacks of a slanderous nature.

The Freethought Review

WANGANUI, N.Z., MAY 1, 1884.

THE OBJECTS OF ORGANISATION.

THE Freethought body in the colony having thought fit to bring its numerous detachments into communication with each other, and to march in line, the question has been asked by outsiders, What object is to be gained by organisation which could not be attained as well without it? It is urged that the country is free, that individual liberty is not in jeopardy, and that such dangers as the creation of ‘crimes against religion’ are either imaginary or would be rendered harmless by the ‘good sense’ of the people and their rulers. To which it may be replied that the facts do not warrant indifference, but show more conclusively every year that “the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” The shapes that persecution takes are protean. At one time it is found in legal prosecutions; in another in proscription, as in Mr. Bradlaugh’s war with the House of Commons; in another, persecution is to be seen embodied in social prejudice. In theory, liberty of thought and expression has for some time been admitted in England and other countries; but in practice it can hardly be pretended that we have more freedom than was enjoyed when Hume denied the possibility of miracles, and Junius made Burke’s “blood run cold” by the “venom and the rancour” of his attack upon the King. To-day an organisation exists in the United States whose object is to have Christianity recognised as a part of the Constitution of that country. The success of the movement would almost certainly inaugurate an era of disfranchisement and persecution. Christianity has ever been a persecuting religion, and there is no reason to suppose that, given the opportunity, it would not in New Zealand be true to its past history.

But the defence of Liberty is only one of the many objects of Freethought. Christianity is a great force in the world, and if, as Freethinkers believe, its principles are false and hurtful to humanity, it must receive no quarter. It has been checkmated effectually in British India. The 250 millions who live under the flag of England are receiving a Freethought propaganda as active and potent as the Christian, and infinitely more likely to succeed. For the prevailing religions have only to be reformed and stripped of their moral impurities to transform them into the religion of humanity. Buddhism, as originally promulgated, is the best of all religions, and admirably adapted to the genius of the people of India. Turning to England herself, Freethought is winning its conquests through agnosticism in the upper strata of society, and by means of two great secular organisations in the lower. In France, Atheism meets Catholicism face to face. In Germany, there is a metaphysical scepticism enthroned in its Universities, and a happy indifference in all religious questions widely spread throughout Fatherland. In the British colonies, the religions of the mother country have been transplanted, and appear to flourish, yet in no part of the world has scepticism so firm a hold in the minds of intelligent men. It is still fashionable to go to church, to be baptised, married, and buried by the church, to send wife and children twice on Sunday to church, and to pay seat rents and subscribe moderately to missionary enterprise. These are the conventionalities of society, with which conformity is less difficult to the easy-going man of the world than to step out of the beaten track and take the course into which his honest convictions might lead him. What says Freethought to all this? It finds a chaos of beliefs built up out of the private interpretations of the Bible; and it finds one religious corporation with its *semper, ubique et omnibus*, with a mind of its own, and possessing a wide and intimate knowledge of what is passing in every country in the world. The Protestants have for some time

been inclined to doubt the infallibility of the Bible. With the most intelligent the Old Testament has become a mere record of what man, not the Lord, said, while such doctrines as a material hell, preached in the New, have shocked the more rational of the clergy and laity, and are being rapidly abandoned. The work of Freethought has been to demonstrate the human character of the writings in the book from beginning to end; in a word to destroy the foundations from which the Protestant sects at least have raised their religious superstructures. The Romish Church will continue to flourish until education and liberalism have rescued her millions of votaries from the grips of that sacred alliance in which they are held—ignorance and superstition. When the Protestant sects have accepted the principles of Freethought, as they are certain to do within the next fifty years, Rome will see the necessity of abandoning the more repulsive and extravagant of her dogmas, and will be on the return march to the civilised paganism in which she had her origin. But will Freethought have done its work when the foundations of Christianity as a system have been undermined, with nothing left but a sentimental regard for the moral truths which are to be found in that as in all other religions? By no means. On the other hand, the real work will only have begun. We have seen Freethought as the guardian of freedom, and as the eternal foe of an enslaving theology; let us now contemplate it in the conservative and positive aspect of forming and following an ideal of its own.

However great may be the work of combating error and arraigning false principles, of infinitely more importance to society is the constructive energy which shall erect the temple of humanity. It is often charged against Freethought that its labors are iconoclastic and negative. The charge is founded on the grossest misconception of its aims and methods. Let it be supposed that Freethought forms to itself an ideal in which the moral elevation of the human race on earth is the vital principle, is there not a sphere wide enough for all the positive and active virtues, without adding to them the theological speculations about gods and spirits? The fundamental principle of Positivism is, *Live for Others*—a command of supreme authority, before which the maxim of Confucius, Hillel, and Jesus, *Do unto Others*, sinks into a subordinate place. Proceeding yet another step, we have the sacred motto:

“ Love as the principle ;
Order as the basis ;
Progress as the end.”

Applying the term religion in its derivative sense, and separated from the supernatural, we have the Religion of Humanity, the worship of an ideal in which the good of the human race has the highest place. The supernatural, whether associated with theological or metaphysical conceptions, has no shrine in the temples of humanity. The myths of theology have been relegated to their proper sphere, and no longer play a part in guiding the human conscience, which is left free to obey its own dictates, directed by the reciprocal action of duty between man and man. Whether we follow the method of Positivism or any other, the object remains the same. There will be a wide variety of opinions among Freethinkers as to the paths: there will be but one opinion about the goal. Although we have noticed by way of illustration the leading principles of the Positive Philosophy, the writer differs widely from many of the details of the system. It is sufficient we here show that Freethinkers have a creed—a creed containing a single article of belief, leaving those who accept it free to attain the consummation of their faith in their own way. It is this higher faith—the enthusiasm of humanity—which will give to the world a deeper morality and a loftier conception of duty. Theology can never supply the inspiration, as it cannot afford demonstration of the truth of its own dogmas, and, being based on rewards and punishments, it does not appeal to the highest sense of moral obligation. The Freethinker, in a word, possesses an ideal pure, lofty, and unselfish, attracting the best and appealing to all—devotion to the ever real and present cause of humanity.

B.

MATERIALISM.—(Continued.)

We have seen that the main objection to a monistic theory of the universe is based upon certain *a priori* fallacies, such as that matter cannot think, and that whatever can be thought of apart, or has a separate name, exists as a separate entity, and that the conditions of a phenomenon must necessarily resemble the phenomenon itself. How persistent and far reaching are notions of this class has been admirably shown by Mill in the fifth book of his “Logic,” though as Professor Bain remarks in his own work on the same subject, many of them are extra-logical, and cannot be adduced as violating either deductive or inductive precepts, and owe their influence “to defective acquaintance with the subject matter of the reasonings and to a low order of intellectual cultivation generally, rather than to misapprehending logical method.” This is conspicuous even in so profound a thinker as Bishop Butler, whose first chapter of the “Analogy,” that “Of a Future Life,” read by the light of modern science, seems almost puerile in its argument, though logically consistent in maintaining the natural immortality of brutes as well as of man. The truth is that in our day we have come to regard Nature from a different point of view than that taken by the majority of philosophic thinkers of the past, and especially of those whose philosophy and science were determined by their theology. By them the material universe was regarded as an inert mass, to which form and motion was imparted from without, by a being who was substantially an infinite man. To the modern thinker the universe seems almost alive. Not only do bodies of immense magnitude whirl through space in strict accordance with known mechanical conditions, but they convey to us their molecular pulsations, in the shape of light, heat, and electrical effects, with such perfect rhythm that through such instruments as the spectroscope they reveal to us much of their history as certainly and definitely as the telephone conveys the sound of the human voice. In our day science deals with aetherial undulations and atomic motions with as much ease as she deals with astronomical phenomena, subjecting both to the processes of the calculus, and having once established the primary equations by observation and experiment proceeding by purely mathematical reasoning, continually checked by verification, to unfold the secrets of Nature, and to predict what experience afterwards confirms. However convenient it may be for practical purposes to keep up the old distinction between inorganic and organic matter, as chemical writers especially were till very lately in the habit of doing, we must remember that from the philosophical point of view this distinction is arbitrary and conventional. No chemist and no biologist can say where matter ends and life begins. A spec of protoplasm is in some respects less organic than a crystal. The organic nature of the former is rather potential than actual, and it is hard to see why a crystal which repairs a broken facet or angle should not be credited with as much inner potency as the Hydrozoa or the Actinozoa which repair themselves in a similar manner. In short all Nature tends to become organic in the sense of differentiation of parts and specialization of function. An iceberg is almost as complicated a structure of the molecules of water arranged in definite crystalline forms, as is the whale that swims beside it a structure of other molecules arranged in what we call an organic form. In both there is a similar play of complex forces holding the atoms together beyond a certain sphere and repelling them within it. Both derive their being from different forms of the same energy, and of neither is it necessary to say that it was especially designed or created, except to gratify that common craving for an explanation which explains nothing, derived from an earlier stage of thought. Chemical elective affinity shows the atoms simulating a form of choice which is only carried a step further by the Amoeba and other forms of Proteus animalcule when they select their appropriate nourishment from the water in which they exist, and all vegetable and animal life essentially consists in the redistribution of external forces. It is only those who are ignorant of the latent powers of matter, who fail to

see in it, with Professor Tyndall, the "promise and potency of all terrestrial life," while a great biologist like Haeckel holds "that consciousness, like sensation and volition, like all other soul-activities, is a function of the organism, a mechanical activity of the cells; and, as such, is referable to chemical and physical processes." If, as evolution teaches, the connection and order of our ideas tends to become identical with the connection and order of things, it is evident that we must come to a mode of conceiving the universe radically inconsistent with the old theology. We may seek to retain something of the old belief by using its phrases emptied of all meaning, and in the Pantheism of the "God-intoxicated" Spinoza many persons have fancied a real reconciliation between theology and science could be effected, but the God of Spinoza is a pure being, and thus used the term "God" connotes none of those ethical ideas which attach to the personal God of popular theology. In this sense an orthodox critic has not unfairly said that with "Pantheism everything is God except God himself." Monism, soberly regarding the universe, entirely fails to see any sign of personality in it except as the outcome of a long and complex process of evolution culminating in man. Moreover, as Haeckel says, "the cruel and merciless struggle for existence which rages throughout living nature, and in the course of nature *must* rage, this unceasing and inexorable competition of all living creatures, is an incontestable fact"—a fact utterly incompatible with the existence of a benevolent deity, such as any scheme of modern supernaturalism must postulate before its dogmas can be either credible or credited. Belief in the supernatural, depending mainly upon sentiment and emotion, it may be safely affirmed that belief in the existence of a malevolent personal God will never arise among civilised mankind, and if personality is admitted it is to such a belief only that the facts of the universe point. In this respect at least, the most orthodox writers are in complete accord with the most pronounced Agnostics and Atheists of the present day. Newman's "Apologia" contains a more terrible indictment against nature for cruelty than do Mill's Essays on Religion, and Bishop Magee in his "Discourses" seems to gloat over the fact in the interests of Christianity "that there are no laws so merciless—so utterly unforgiving, as the laws of nature—aye, and so utterly regardless of the circumstance whether a man has transgressed ignorantly or purposely: he who transgresses ignorantly and he who transgresses wilfully is alike beaten with many stripes. The great machinery of the world will not arrest its revolutions, for the cry of a human creature who by a very innocent error, by the mistaken action of his free-thought, is being ground to pieces beneath them." In other words nature is essentially impersonal and immoral, not as it were incidentally, but in its innermost processes and methods by which sentience is gradually developed into consciousness, and is profoundly indifferent to the suffering caused by the inverse operation till the unconscious and non-sentient stage is again reached. That it is reached at last is perhaps the best that can be said in favour of nature's benevolence. As is the work so must be the author, and the complaisant optimism of the theologians is dashed to pieces against the hard facts of the universe. Regarding consciousness, with its enormous capacity for pain, and its limited capacity for pleasure, as the result of an extremely complex play of forces culminating in the still greater complexity of the social organism, it is easy to see how readily the mistake is made of attributing to the more general relations of things what exists only in very special relations. Such ethical ideas as benevolence, right, and justice, imply personal relations which have no meaning when applied to the impersonal. Existence, order in time and in place, causation or resemblance, may be truly asserted of any facts, but the more special the facts the more special must be the propositions we can make concerning them. To talk of impersonal nature as cruel or unjust is like speaking of an angry triangle or a wicked colour. To attribute personality to nature or to attribute nature to a personal cause without the strongest evidence, is to introduce needless moral

and intellectual difficulties, and to add a new horror to the universe which theology vainly endeavours to hide under vague phrases which appeal to the feelings but cannot blind the intellect. On the other hand, to know that we have only to deal with the fixed order of things and that in some respects we can "rule by obeying nature's powers," while in the life of humanity we hope to find that continual approach to an ideal perfection to which each of us may contribute materially and morally, is to accept a theory which agrees with facts and furnishes a motive for action. It is true that this motive is mainly altruistic, and so may seem to have but little force compared to the egoistic sentiments to which theology appeals, but hopes and fears which are purely personal react on character, and worldliness and "other worldliness," including in the term the craven worship of mere power not felt to be justly exercised, tends to produce a character in which human sympathy is deficient and intellectual perception is perverted. Regarding character and morality as products of the social factor, it does not seem probable that either can be improved by believing in a moral governor of the world who was either unable or unwilling to prevent his subjects from being wicked, or in a creator who punishes men for being what he has made them, and revenges rather than reforms, and all without proportion or justice. On the contrary, the proverb, "tell me the company you keep and I'll tell you what you are," applies to ideas as much as to persons. As are the gods so are the people. It is only those nations which have broken the chains of their primitive beliefs that are really progressive. Monism gives free scope to that moral and intellectual evolution which bases conduct and knowledge upon experience. Regarding nature and human nature as equally the subject of law, the outcome of inscrutable and impersonal power, mankind will learn to limit their hopes and fears by their experience, and cease to trouble themselves about problems which cannot even be intelligibly stated much less solved. The questions still asked about morality will be more easily answered because confined to their proper sphere—the special relations of the social organism to its environment, and of its parts to the whole. As Mr. John Morley eloquently says in his "Voltaire," it is "monstrous to suppose that because a man does not accept your synthesis, he is therefore a being without a positive creed or a coherent body of belief capable of guiding and inspiring conduct. There are new solutions for him, if the old are fallen dumb. If he no longer believes death to be a stroke from the sword of God's justice, but the leaden footfall of an inflexible law of matter, the humility of his awe is deepened, and the tenderness of his pity made holier, that creatures who can love so much should have their days so shut round with a wall of darkness. The purifying anguish of remorse will be stronger, not weaker, when he has trained himself to look upon every wrong in thought, every duty omitted from act, each infringement of the inner spiritual law which humanity is constantly perfecting for its own guidance and advantage, less as a breach of the decrees of an unseen tribunal, than as an ungrateful infection, weakening and corrupting the future of his brothers; and he will be less effectually raised from inmost prostration of soul by a doubtful subjective reconciliation, so meanly comfortable to his own individuality, than by hearing full in the ear the sound of the cry of humanity craving sleepless succour from her children. That swelling consciousness of height and freedom with which the old legends of an omnipotent divine majesty fill the breast, may still remain; for how shall the universe ever cease to be a sovereign wonder of overwhelming power and superhuman fixedness of law. And a man will be already in no mean paradise, if at the hour of sunset a good hope can fall upon him like harmonies of music, that the earth shall still be fair, and the happiness of every feeling creature still receive a constant augmentation, and each good cause yet find worthy defenders, when the memory of his own poor name and personality has long been blotted out of the brief recollection of men for ever.

Reviews.

Lays of the Land of the Maori and Moa: By Thomas Bracken, author of "Flowers of the Freclands," "Golden Foundations," "Asleep in the Forest," etc.

The volume of poems now before us will certainly add much to the reputation of their author, who has long been favourably known as a writer endowed with no small measure of the poetic faculty, and this not only in the lower sense of being able to write smooth verses not altogether devoid of meaning (which is about all that in many minds attaches to the term "poetry"), but in the higher sense of one susceptible above ordinary men to the influences of nature on the senses, and more responsive to their suggested emotions. It has been said that poetry is the most philosophic of all writing, because its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative. In one sense this is perfectly correct. Poetry is the image of man and nature, and therefore true in the same sense as a picture is true, that is, it is entirely false except in relation to the standpoint from which it is taken. More than this, while truth is the aim and end of philosophy, pleasure is the principle direct end of poetry; has in view, and truth to nature as it appears to man as man, and not as philosopher or moralist, is one of the means the poet takes for its attainment. But language being the medium by which the poet conveys his impressions, both sensuous and emotional, to other minds, just as colour is the medium by which the painter conveys his, he must use it subject to all those associations by virtue of which words give rise to ideas of pain or pleasure. Consciously, or more likely unconsciously, working upon this principle, Mr. Bracken, like the vast majority of our popular poets, writes as if he accepted the ordinary religious and moral ideas of the day as true, but deals with them in so broad and liberal a spirit that some of the southern papers have supposed that he wrote "from the Agnostic point of view." Considering that the preface to the "Lays of the Land of the Maori and Moa" is written by the Rev. Rutherford Waddell, M.A., and dated from St. Andrew's Manse, Dunedin, and that he says the poems "exhibit a high faith in God and Nature," this supposition was somewhat hasty and unwarranted. The volume, which is dedicated to Sir George Grey in some graceful verses, very appropriately begins with "The March of Te Rauparaha," which is described in a spirited poem full of local colouring, the historical facts being taken from Mr. Travers' excellent paper in the "Transactions of the N.Z. Institute, 1872," on the "Life and Times of Te Rauparaha." The second poem, "Waipounamutu," shows Mr. Bracken at his best, as a describer of natural scenery in language at once poetical and exact.

Up northwards, near Waikato's spreading plains,
A crystal mirror shimmers 'mong the hills,
And sunbeams dance upon its breast to strains
Of forest music; bell-birds, tuis, rills,
All blend their voices with the magic sounds
The whispering reeds and rushes softly make,
Where playful wood-sprites have their pleasure grounds,
When Spring is young and Summer is awake.

The melody of these lines is extremely pleasing, and not less so is the impression they convey that their author has gone to the fountain head for his inspiration, and describes what he has actually seen and felt, not merely echoed the words of others. Equally happy is the description he gives of the tragedy of which the placid lake is the scene, and if his Maoris are considerably idealised, they are at least as true to life as Fenimore Cooper's Red Indians. In "M'Gillviray's Dream" an incident of the Maori war is related with much power and pathos, while "Old Bendigo," as Mr. Waddell truly says, "reminds one of the best of Bret Harte's" poems. In a "Christmas Reverie," Mr. Bracken shows that he is not quite contented with the facile explanations theology and metaphysics give of God, man, and Nature. As in Tennyson's "Two Voices," he discusses the two sides of the question more or less, and asks:—

Did God send Jesus down to die
A felon's death on Calvary?
The sacrifice was made in vain,

"Ah! why

For wrong still triumphs over right,
And pleasure still succumbs to pain,
And day is shadowed by the night,
And Sin, the tyrant, is not slain,
And Justice staggers in the fight.

That he was satisfied by the answer, which is weak even for a spirit, does not appear. That similar answers have satisfied a great many excellent persons is perhaps more to the purpose. "Annihilation" is a sort of paraphrase of a good deal that passes for argument in sermons addressed to the nerves. Such appeals to egoistic sentiment must have far more than their due weight now, because people have been taught for generations to look upon personal immortality as certain, when the feelings now centred on the individual are now transferred to humanity at large there will be no sense of loss, as it were, of a natural right, and the fact will be realised "that where we are death is not, and where death is we are not." On the whole Mr. Bracken is most successful when dealing with simple themes, and though there is much breadth of thought and richness of language in such pieces as "The Golden Jubilee" and in the "Addresses," on various occasions, he excels in lyrical poetry. Here he has not to trouble himself with the deep things of science and philosophy, but to express some intense feeling, or sentiment, such as love, devotion, or friendship, which appeals to the sympathies of learned or unlearned alike. What he feels deeply he expresses clearly in words which go direct to the heart. The reader of "Not Understood" will derive more moral benefit from it than from most sermons, and in "Away With Regret" good advice is given in the spirit and with the music of Tom Moore. Deeper chords are struck in "George Eliot," "Mrs. George Darrell," and "Kaitangata," and on the whole the impression produced by this volume of Mr. Bracken's poetry is very favourable. As one of our minor poets Mr. Bracken may claim a fair place in English literature, and a very high one in Australasian.

R.P.

FUNERAL OF MRS. G. J. HOLYOAKE.

Mrs. Holyoake, of Sudbury, Harrow, whose death occurred at Brighton, was interred at Highgate Cemetery. Rev. Stopford A. Brooke would have officiated at the chapel,—the views of the deceased being mostly in accord with those which characterise his ministry,—but he was prevented by an unavoidable engagement. As Mr. Holyoake had often spoken at the graves of others, his wife had a wish—the only public one she ever expressed—that a few words should be said at her own. That this might be, Mr. Holyoake himself spoke in the chapel, first reading a letter sent by Mr. Stopford Brooke, which, from its beautiful sympathy, was of the nature of a service. After that, he read from the second book of Esdras the remarkable dialogue between the Prophet and the Angel Uriel upon the knowledge and duties of this world, following the words by a short oration upon the three qualities which distinguished Mrs. Holyoake,—that of service of others, in which she never thought of herself; that of truth, not of speech only, but of conduct, of which she had so clear a sense that the absence of it in others was not concealable from her; that of pride, which was more than self-respect,—it was debtlessness,—an independence of obligation which was not a second nature,—it was her first; and she had no other. Though called upon early in life to confront alone the death of her first child, to be the sole watcher, the sole sympathiser, and sole mourner at an unattended grave, she brought away no murmur. During more than forty years, she never forgot it, and never complained. It was written of her:

The martyr's cross without the martyr's cause,
The grief, the wrong, without the self-applause;
A round of homely duties nobly done,—
These were her life, who sleeps beneath this stone.

The service in the chapel being ended, relatives, sons and daughters, and early friends proceeded to the grave, where Mr. G. D. Collet sang the fine hymn of Harriet Martineau, beginning

Beneath this starry arch
Nought resteth or is still;
But all things have their march;
As if by one great Will
Moves one, move all,—hark to the footfall!
On, on, forever.

--London Daily News.

ADDRESSES FOR THE NAMING OF CHILDREN
AND THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

BY ANNIE BESANT.

Issued by the authority of the National Secular Society.

(From the National Secular Society's Almanack.)

THE NAMING OF CHILDREN.

FRIENDS; the parents of this child have brought him [her] to this our platform, that in the presence of our Secular Society he [she] may here publicly receive the name by which he [she] shall hereafter be known.

We do not, in thus naming the child, either mock at or imitate the office of Christian Baptism. But since every child must be known by some name in the society to which he [she] belongs, it is well and brotherly that the name shall be given in the presence of his [her] parents, friends, and of those who will surround his [her] expanding life.

We do not ask from the child any promise of renouneal of a world of whose value he [she] is as yet ignorant; nor of pledge to be faithful to a creed he [she] cannot as yet appreciate; nor of adherence to dogmas he [she] is as yet unable to either intelligently embrace or intelligently reject. We leave until manhood [womanhood] arrives, the responsibilities of manhood [womanhood], and among those responsibilities is the choice of a creed which shall color the life, of a philosophy on which conduct shall be based.

But while from the unconscious babe we ask for no promise, and while we reject as irrelevant impertinence any pledge pretended to be given in his [her] name, we do ask from the parents the promise that the child be kept free from the touch of the priest on his [her] entrance into life, shall also be guarded from priestly influence during the receptive years of childhood, and that no intrusion of priestly authority shall be permitted to mould the plastic thought, nor fashion the ductile intelligence.

And we bid the parents remember the sacredness of their duty to the young life they have given, and whose future lies so largely at their mercy. The body is to be tended, trained and developed; the mind to be nurtured, filled and cultured. The best education their means and their opportunities permit, it is their duty to give to this child. And when he [she] arrives at years of discretion, it is their duty to leave him [her] with faculties trained and powers sharpened, to choose his [her] own creed, to direct his [her] own life.

No anxiety is ours such as wrings the heart of the Christian parent; we fear no eternal hell, no misery beyond the grave. We know of no misery that man cannot heal, no hell the fires of which man cannot quench. We welcome the new life with gladness, and without dread.

And now, what shall we wish for the child we name to-day, the child [*here insert name*]. Let us wish that hereafter he [she] may have intelligence to see the truth, enthusiasm to embrace the truth, courage to proclaim the truth, loyalty to live the truth. In the children is the hope of our movement, in their future the motive for our struggle. Let us hope that our lives may make this child's life the brighter; that our treading down of evil things may make his [her] path the smoother; that our courage and devotion may lift his [her] career into a purer and healthier atmosphere. And let us hope, also, that when the loved flag of Freedom falls from our hands, palsied at the touch of Death, these hands may catch it and carry it on further, and that in his manhood [her womanhood] [*here insert name*] may come voluntarily to that Freethought platform whereto his [her] mother's arms have brought him [her] unconsciously to-night.

THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

FRIENDS; we are met here to-day to render the last offices of respect, the last tribute of affection to a friend and fellow-worker, to lay in its last resting-place the body of [*insert name*]. We meet with heavy hearts, heavy with sympathy for those whose sorrow we here reverently share. Across this open grave we look into the very face of Death, and we look with eyes tear-blinded but without one thought of fear.

Sad is death at all times. Sad even when [*as now if the dead had reached old age*] Death comes in the evening of life, to lay on eyes dim with age the poppies of an endless sleep; when he renders rigid the muscles palsied with a long life's toil, and chills into silence the tongue grown stiff with age. [*Here insert one or both of the*

following paragraphs, according as the dead was in mature life or in youth: Sadder when Death breaks off manhood [womanhood] in its prime, bringing night while noon is high in the heavens, and sleep while vigor and energy for work remain. But saddest of all, perhaps, is Death when he strikes down, as now, the youth [the maid] in the flush of his [her] morning, with all the promise of the future unkept all the hope of the future unfulfilled. It were heartless to deny the sadness and the gloom-shadow cast by Death, and the tears that drop into the open grave are tears that sully no courage, nor have to manhood aught of shame. Yet since Death must come to all to whom life has come, while it were cruelty not to sorrow, it were cowardice to break into despairing and useless repining. While we give tears to the dead, let us from the grave turn back to life, life which has still its duties, if for a while it have lost its glory and its joy.

The message which comes from this open grave is one of Love and of Work. Of Love, in that our dead reminds us that when the grave opens love's work is closed, and bids us be gentle to the living that we may need to drop no tears of remorse over the dead. Love should be the draught offered to the lips of the living, not only the libation poured out on the corpse in the tomb. Of Work, in that he [she] recalls to us that life is uncertain and brief at its longest; that all we can do to help and to improve our generation must be done now, while this priceless treasure of life is ours, and that when death's night overshadows us our work is done for ever, for either good or ill.

We leave our dead to his [her] rest. We give him [her] back to that great mother who bears and destroys, evolves and recalls, builds up and pulls down, to Nature the One and the All, the Eternal Life and Death, with whom Death is but the first stage of new life. For us, we turn back to our work, while conscious life remains to us, to do our best until our turn to sleep shall come. Hope and work belong to the living; sleep and rest to the dead. We leave him [her] to eternal rest, and bid him [her] tenderly our last Farewell.

THOMAS PAINE.

An old slander on Thomas Paine, which has been revived recently, is thus met by Thomas Curtis, a well-known old Philadelphia Freethinker, who writes as follows to the 'Boston Investigator':—"In the year 1858, the Rev. John Chambers, pastor of the Broad Street Independent Church, of Philadelphia, announced in a sermon on Paine, that one member of his congregation knew him, and would testify to his great wickedness, etc. The gentleman referred to proved to be a Mr. Bruen, a retired wholesale merchant of New York, but at that time resided in Walnut Street, near 16th, Philadelphia. In company with Mr. Thomas Ilman, engraver, and Mr. James West, shoe dealer, I visited Mr Bruen at his residence, the day after the announcement was made by Mr Chambers. Mr. Bruen stated that he had lived nearly opposite the house where Mr. Paine lived and died, and that he had often seen him. The following questions were then put to Mr. Bruen in writing:—

1. Did you ever see Thomas Paine drunk or intoxicated? Answer—No.
2. Did you ever hear of Thomas Paine being a drunkard? Answer—No.
3. Do you suppose if Thomas Paine had been a drunkard, or given to intoxication, you would have heard of it? Answer—Most certainly, because the man was so prominent that anything about himself and life was matter of public comment.
4. What do you know of the condition of Paine previous to his death? Answer—I was told, at the time, by a neighbor, who visited him in his last hours, that Thomas Paine died as he lived, an apostate to Christianity.

The facts as here stated were published the following day as an advertisement in the 'Philadelphia Ledger,' and no attempt at contradiction was ever made by Rev. John Chambers, or by Mr. Bruen, to both of whom copies of the paper were sent. Although this emphatic denial was thus publicly made, yet the following year the clerical gentlemen still continued their slanders, as they do at the present day."

Gems.

A cheerful face is nearly as good for an invalid as healthy weather.—FRANKLIN.

Justice without power is impotent. Power without justice is tyrannical.—PASCAL.

One may ruin himself by frankness, but surely one dishonors himself by duplicity.—VIELLARD.

The truest mark of being born with great qualities is being born without envy.—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

Praise, like gold and diamonds, owes its value only to its scarcity. It becomes cheap as it becomes vulgar, and will no longer raise expectation or animate enterprise.—JOHNSON.

Whenever you commend, add your reasons for doing so; it is this which distinguishes the approbation of a man of sense from the flattery of sycophants and admiration of fools.—STEELE.

I will never resign my opinions for interest, though I would cheerfully abandon them on conviction. My reason, such as it is, can only be controlled by better reason, to which I am ever open.—GIBBON.

"The time has come for men to find
Their statute-book within the mind;
To read its laws, and cease to pore
The musty tomes of ages o'er.
The time has come to preach the soul;
No meagre shred, the manly whole;
Let agitation come, who fears?
We need a flood; the filth of years
Has gathered 'round us—roll them on;
What cannot stand had best be gone."

—WM. DENTON.

By "specificism" I mean hardness of belief, so that an increased specificism is an increased perception of the difficulty of proving assertions: or, in other words, it is an increased application and an increased diffusion of the rules of reasoning and the laws of evidence. This feeling of hesitation and of suspended judgment has, in every department of thought, been the invariable preliminary to all the intellectual revolutions through which the human mind had passed: and without it there could be no progress, no civilisation. In physics it is the necessary precursor of science: in politics, of liberty; in theology, of toleration.—BUCKLE.

COL. INGERSOLL ON SUBSTITUTES FOR CHURCHES.

Reporter—You have stated your objections to the churches—what would you have to take their place?

Col. Ingersoll—There was a time when men had to meet together for the purpose of being told the law. This was before printing, and for hundreds and hundreds of years most people depended for their information on what they had heard. The ear was the avenue to the brain. There was a time, of course, when Freemasonry was necessary, so that a man could carry, not only all over his own country, but to another, a certificate that he was a gentleman, that he was an honest man. There was a time, and it was necessary, for people to assemble. They had no books, no papers, no way of reaching each other. But now all that is changed.—The daily press gives you the happenings of the world. Libraries give you the thoughts of the greatest and best.

Every family of moderate means can command the principal sources of information. There is no necessity for going to the church and hearing the same story forever. Let the minister write what he wishes to say.—Let him publish it. If it is worth buying, people will read it. It is hardly fair to get them in a church in the name of duty and then inflict on them a sermon that under no circumstances they would read. Of course, there will always be meetings, occasions when people come together to exchange ideas, to hear what a man has to say upon some question, but the idea of going fifty-two days in a year to hear anybody on the same subject is absurd.

Reporter—Would you include a man like Henry Ward Beecher in that statement?

Col. Ingersoll—Beecher is interesting just in proportion that he is not Orthodox, and he is altogether more interesting when talking against the creeds. He delivered a sermon

the other day in Chicago, in which he takes the ground that Christianity is kindness, and that, consequently, no one could be an Infidel. Every one believes in kindness, at least theoretically. In that sermon he throws away all creed and comes to the conclusion that Christianity is a life, and not an aggregation of intellectual convictions upon certain subjects. The more sermons like that are preached, probably the better. What I intended was the eternal repetition of the old story: That God made the world and a man, and then allowed the Devil to tempt him, and then thought of a scheme of salvation, of vicarious atonement, fifteen hundred years afterwards: drowned everybody except Noah and his family, and, afterwards, when he failed to civilize the Jewish people, came in person and suffered death, and announced the doctrine that all who believed on him would be saved, and those who did not, eternally lost. Now this story, with occasional references to the patriarchs and the New Jerusalem, and the exceeding heat of perdition, and the wonderful joys of Paradise, is the average sermon, and this story is told again, again, and yet again, by the same man, listened to by the same people, without any effect except to tire the speaker and the hearer.

If all the ministers would take their texts from Shakespeare; if they would read every Sunday a selection from some of the great plays, the result would be infinitely better. They would all learn something; the mind would be enlarged, and the sermon would appear short.

GOD—IMMORTALITY.

I do not believe in the existence of any personal God. I regard the universe as the one fact, as the one existence—that is, as the absolute thing. I am a part of this. I do not say that there is no God; I simply say that I do not believe there is. There may be millions of them. Neither do I say that man is not immortal. Upon that point I admit that I do not know, and the declarations of all the priests in the world upon that subject give me no light, and do not even tend to add to my information on the subject; because I know that they know that they don't know. The Infidelity of a hundred years ago knew nothing, comparatively speaking, of geology; nothing of astronomy; nothing of the ideas of Lamarck and Darwin; nothing of evolution; nothing, comparatively speaking, of their religions; nothing of India, that womb of metaphysics; in other words, the Infidels of a hundred years ago knew the creed of Orthodox Christianity to be false, but had not the facts to demonstrate it. The Infidels of to-day have the facts; that is the difference. A hundred years ago it was a guessing prophecy; to-day it is the fact and fulfilment.—Everything in nature is working against superstition to-day. Superstition is like a thorn in the flesh, and everything, from dust to stars, is working together to destroy the false. The smallest "pebble" answers the greatest parson. One blade of grass, rightly understood, destroys the Orthodox creed.—INGERSOLL.

SENTENCE ON GALILEO BY THE HOLY OFFICE, AND HIS RECANTATION.

JUNE 22ND, 1633.

"Whereas you, Galileo, son of the late Vincenzo Galilei, Florentine, aged seventy years, were in the year 1615 denounced to this Holy Office for holding as true the false doctrine taught by many, that the sun is the centre of the world and immovable, and that the earth moves, and also with a diurnal motion; for having disciples to whom you taught the same doctrine; for holding correspondence with certain mathematicians of Germany concerning the same; for having printed certain letters, entitled 'On the Solar Spots,' wherein you developed the same doctrine as true; and for replying to the objections from the Holy Scriptures, which from time to time were urged against it, by glossing the said Scriptures according to your own meaning; and whereas there was thereupon produced the copy of a document in the form of a letter, purporting to be written by you to one formerly your disciple, and in this divers propositions are set forth, following the hypothesis of Copernicus, which are contrary to the true sense and authority of Holy Scripture:

"This Holy Tribunal being therefore desirous of proceeding against the disorder and mischief thence resulting, which went on increasing to the prejudice of the Holy

Faith, by command of his Holiness and of the most eminent Lords Cardinals of this supreme and universal Inquisition, the two propositions of the stability of the sun and the motion of the earth were by the theological 'Qualifiers' qualified as follows :

"The proposition that the sun is the centre of the world and does not move from its place is absurd and false philosophically, and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to the Holy Scripture.

"The proposition that the earth is not the centre of the world and immovable, but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is equally absurd and false philosophically, and theologically considered, at least erroneous in faith.

"But whereas it was desired at that time to deal leniently with you, it was decreed at the Holy Congregation held before his Holiness on the 25th February, 1616, that his Eminence the Lord Cardinal Bellarmine should order you to abandon altogether the said false doctrine, and in the event of your refusal, that an injunction should be imposed upon you by the Commissary of the Holy Office, to give up the said doctrine, and not to teach it to others, nor to defend it, nor even discuss it; and failing your acquiescence in this injunction, that you should be imprisoned. And in execution of this decree, on the following day, at the Palace, and in the presence of his Eminence, the said Lord Cardinal Bellarmine, after being gently admonished by the said Lord Cardinal, the command was intimated to you by the Father Commissary of the Holy Office for the time before a notary and witnesses, that you were altogether to abandon the said false opinion, and not in future to defend or teach it in any way whatsoever, neither verbally nor in writing; and upon your promising to obey were dismissed.

"And in order that a doctrine so pernicious might be wholly rooted out and not insinuate itself further to the grave prejudice of Catholic truth, a decree was issued by the Holy Congregation of the Index, prohibiting the books which treat of this doctrine, and declaring the doctrine itself to be false and wholly contrary to sacred and divine Scripture.

"And whereas a book appeared here recently, printed last year at Florence, the title of which shows that you were the author, this title being: 'Dialogue of Galileo Galilei on the Two Principal Systems of the World, the Ptolemaic and the Copernican'; and whereas the Holy Congregation was afterwards informed that through the publication of the said book, the false opinion of the motion of the earth and the stability of the sun was daily gaining ground, the said book was taken into careful consideration, and in it there was discovered a patent violation of the aforesaid injunction that had been imposed upon you; for in this book you have defended the said opinion previously condemned, and to your face declared to be so, although in the said book you strive by various devices to produce the impression that you leave it undecided, and in express terms as probable: which, however, is a most grievous error, as an opinion can in no wise be probable which has been declared and defined to be contrary to Divine Scripture:

"Therefore by our order you were cited before this Holy Office, where, being examined upon your oath, you acknowledged the book to be written and published by you

"Invoking, therefore, the most holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ and his most glorious Mother, and ever Virgin Mary, by this our final sentence, which sitting in judgment, with the counsel and advice of the Reverend Masters of sacred theology and Doctors of both Laws, our assessors, we deliver in these writings, in the cause and causes presently before us between the magnificent Carlo Sinceri, Doctor of both Laws, Proctor Fiscal of this Holy Office, of the one part, and you Galileo Galilei, the defendant, here present, tried and confessed as above, of the other part,—we say, pronounce, sentence, declare, that you, the said Galileo, by reason of the matters adduced in process, and by you confessed as above, have rendered yourself in the judgment of this Holy Office vehemently suspected of heresy, namely of having believed and held the doctrine—which is false and contrary to the sacred and divine Scripture—that the sun is the centre of the world and does not move from east to west, and that the earth moves and is not the centre of the world; and that an opinion may be held and defended as probable after it has been declared and defined to be contrary to Holy Scripture; and that consequently you have incurred all the censures and penalties imposed and promulgated in the sacred canons and other constitutions, general and par-

ticular, against such delinquents. From which we are content that you be absolved, provided that first, with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, you abjure, curse, and detest the aforesaid errors, heresies, and every other error and heresy contrary to the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church in the form to be prescribed by us.

"And in order that this your grave and pernicious error and transgression may not remain altogether unpunished, and that you may be more cautious for the future, and an example to others, that they may abstain from similar delinquencies—we ordain that the book of the 'Dialogues of Galileo Galilei' be prohibited by public edict.

"We condemn you to the formal prison of this Holy Office during our pleasure, and by way of salutary penance, we enjoin that for three years to come you repeat once a week the seven penitential Psalms.

"Reserving to ourselves full liberty to moderate, commute or take off, in whole or in part, the aforesaid penalties and penance.

"And so we say, pronounce, sentence, declare, ordain, condemn and reserve, in this and any other better way and form which we can and may lawfully employ.

"So we the undersigned Cardinals pronounce."

"F. Cardinalis de Asculo, G. Cardinalis Bentiulus, Fr. Cardinalis de Cremona, Fr. Antonius Cardinalis Sr Honuphrij, B. Cardinalis Gypsius, Fr. Cardinalis Verospius, M. Cardinalis Ginettus."

Immediately after the delivery of this sentence Galileo was compelled to kneel down and read the following recantation:—

"I, Galileo Galilei, son of the late Vincenzo Galilei, Florentine, aged seventy years, arraigned personally before this tribunal, and kneeling before you, Most Eminent and Reverend Lord Cardinals, Inquisitors general against heretical depravity throughout the whole Christian Republic, having before my eyes and touching with my hands, the holy Gospels—swear that I have always believed, do now believe, and by God's help will for the future believe, all that is held, preached, and taught by the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church. But whereas—after an injunction had been judicially intimated to me by this Holy Office, to the effect that I must altogether abandon the false opinion that the sun is the centre of the world and immovable, and that the earth is not the centre of the world and moves, and that I must not hold, defend, or teach in any way whatsoever, verbally or in writing, the said doctrine, and after it had been notified to me that the said doctrine was contrary to Holy Scripture—I wrote and printed a book in which I discuss this doctrine already condemned, and adduce arguments of great cogency in its favor, without presenting any solution of these, and for this cause I have been pronounced by the Holy Office to be vehemently suspected of heresy, that is to say, of having held and believed that the sun is the centre of the world and immovable, and that the earth is not the centre and moves:—

"Therefore, desiring to remove from the minds of your Eminences, and of all faithful Christians, this strong suspicion reasonably conceived against me, with sincere heart and unfeigned faith, I abjure, curse, and detest the aforesaid errors and heresies, and generally every other error and sect whatsoever contrary to the said Holy Church; and I swear that in future I will never again say or assert, verbally or in writing, anything that might furnish occasion for a similar suspicion regarding me; but that should I know any heretic, or person suspected of heresy, I will denounce him to this Holy Office, or to the Inquisitor and ordinary of the place where I may be. Further, I swear and promise to fulfil and observe in their integrity all penances that had been, or that shall be, imposed upon me by this Holy Office. And, in the event of my contravening (which God forbid!) any of these my promises, protestations, and oaths, I submit myself to all the pains and penalties imposed and promulgated in the sacred canons and other constitutions, general and particular, against such delinquents. So help me God, and these his holy Gospels, which I touch with my hands.

"I, the said Galileo Galilei, have abjured, sworn, promised, and bound, myself as above; and in witness of the truth thereof I have with my own hand subscribed the present document of my adjuration, and recited it word for word at Rome, in the convent of Minerva, this twenty-second day of June, 1633.

"I, Galileo Galilei, have abjured as above with my own hand."

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