

called "spiritual science," for it is the exact antipodes of classified knowledge—it is unclassified ignorance.

We mean every word we have said, but, like our opponent, or rather our fellow searcher after truth, we do not wish to quarrel with any, and cede to all perfect liberty of thought. Our mother is a Christian and we would trust her with our life.

The War is Getting Interesting.

Never before in the world's history has old superstition been driven into the dark corners as in the closing scene of the nineteenth century. The Freethought papers and those who read and profit by them, the Freethought societies, the contentions in the orthodox camp, the contact of the United States with Christian Spain and the success of the Liberal University are putting the Christian soldiers to flight or enlisting them in our glorious cause by the thousands. Then many religious questions are being forced upon our government which will never be settled until they are settled right. One of these questions is explained by the recent words of a well known saint who has been acting as chaplain to our army, the Rev. Sam Small:

"The chaplains are a sort of sop to the church sentiment without much substance to them. They just take a minister and put a uniform on him with a silver cross on the shoulder, pay him \$200 a month and turn him loose on 1,200 men without any of the implements of the scriptural warfare to fight with. I've been disappointed. When I get out I'm going to suggest that they do away with the chaplains. I suppose there may be a howl, but it is better to face the issue and have the whole system revised."

Then the seating of the Mormon congressman-elect is bringing facts to the notice of the pious ones that will do the cause of Freethought very much good. The following, clipped from one of our exchanges, shows the people that the Bible is not a safe guide and that it has been a defense for a great wrong that perhaps has never before been brought to their notice:

"Protestants and Mormons alike believe, to a greater or less degree, in the inspiration of the Bible. Many of the people who are proposing to fight Mr. Roberts believe, or claim to believe, that the Bible, from 'kiver to kiver,' is the inspired word of God; that it was given by inspiration; that it is an infallible moral guide; that it lays down proper rules of faith and practice; that its precepts are good, and that its injunctions are binding in every particular. These people insist that the Bible opposes polygamy, and for that reason they oppose it. Now if these same people could be made to believe that the Bible enjoined, or even endorsed, polygamy, they would favor it; it would be sacrilege for them not to do so.

Now the question is, does the Bible favor or enjoin polygamy? Mr. Roberts says it does. His opposing religionists say it does not. So you see that in the last analysis the question resolves itself into a question of Bible interpretation: nothing more, nothing less. Now, even though I believed both the Bible and the Book of Mormon, the grounds are too narrow for a liberal man to stand upon. But as I do not believe in the inspiration or infallibility of either, you can readily see the untenable, not to say the ridiculous position in which I would be placed. Besides, to be consistent, it would be necessary that I should believe that the Bible condemns polygamy, and frankness impels me to say that I do not believe that it does. If the Bible is right, polygamy is right. One of the principal reasons why I cannot accept the Bible as my moral guide is because it teaches polygamy. So I cannot join issues with those who stand on the Bible to accuse Mr. Roberts for taking what I consider a rational interpretation of the Bible. In other words, the only reason why Mormons are any worse than Methodists is because they stick closer to the Bible than do the Methodists. To prove that Mormons do stay closer to Bible teachings than do other denominations, permit me to call attention to this, in the epistle of James: 'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up,' etc. Joseph Smith taught the same doctrine; so did President Young, and so do they all, and, what is more, they practice it to this day. So persistently do they practice it that a doctor friend of mine once said to me that 'Utah is the damndest place on earth in which to practice medicine, for if the patient gets well, prayer cured him; if he dies, the doctor killed him.'

"Again, suppose that it was heaven at whose gates Brother Roberts was asking admittance, instead of the United States congress, and he should be refused on the grounds of being a polygamist; and he should appeal the case to a jury composed of David, Solomon and Abraham, what do you think would be his chances for a seat? Think of Abraham refusing Brother Roberts a place in his bosom on the ground that he is a polygamist! Eh? How do you think that would look? Now, candidly, if Brother Roberts is good enough to enter heaven, to recline on Abraham's bosom, and to play on harps of everlasting glory, is he not good enough for congress? I think so."

The appointment of a Catholic arch-bishop, by President McKinley, to fill a very important position is also causing much discussion among we "little fish," and if we can just keep the thing rolling, the United States will not only do as France has done, take "In God we trust" off the coins of the realm, but will take this miserable superstition from the minds of our people. We are proud to be in this fight for liberty and truth.

We believe the Liberal University to be one of the greatest

guns in this greatest of wars, and we are happy to believe that next year, our building having been finished, we will do such execution as will make the very walls of old superstition shake to their foundations. Help us plan the campaign!

The Reverends' Mistakes.

BY D. PRIESTLEY.

The Oregonian of Monday, Dec. 26, has a page devoted to Christmas services in the Portland churches. Not one of the clergy said a word about any historical proof that Jesus ever lived. Some of them mixed the Jesus myth with other myths, but no one tried to show that the Christ myth had advantage over any of the others by being amenable to historic proof.

Dr. Rasmus said, "The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New." Then that fixes the reputation of the loving Jesus. He is the one that drowned all the world with a flood; that inspired the bears to tear in pieces the forty and two children; that sent the plagues upon Egypt, and converted all the dust of that country into lice; that ordered the slaughter of the Midianites, the Amalekites and all the inhabitants of Canaan and not to spare old men or maidens, infants or sucklings. He is the one who commanded his chosen people to murder every one they could get in reach of, through a long succession of generations, until they had become as merciless as wild beasts. When he came into this world himself, under another name, he threatened to send all who did not agree with him into a lake of fire and brimstone, where they should wail and gnash their teeth forever. He is the one who commanded that men should be stoned to death for gathering a few sticks on the sabbath day. The anti-climax was that when he settled in his own country he could not keep his own sabbath, and his chosen people, whose ancestors he had so carefully educated in cruelty and murder, killed him!

Dr. Rasmus says, "The Christ which this world needs is one who can meet and answer the cry of despair of the human heart."

Yes. What the world needs is something helpful. If we have any god we want one who can do something all by himself—one who is a present power in this world. We want a god, if we have any, that we can find ourselves, without intervention of priest or preacher. If we have a god who can not build himself a house, we want one who is not fool enough, when we build him one, to set it afire with lightning or destroy it by a cyclone. One who is at least self-supporting—who can pull one end of a cross-cut saw when we are tired, and who is not impecunious enough to beg pennies of children. One who is a

very present help in time of need (in case of shipwreck, for instance) and will not let us drown, when we call upon him, same as a wooden god does.

Says Dr. Rasmus, "The vital question of this age is dead children, wasted opportunities and blasted lives. To meet this despair there is but one. Christ the son of God."

Why did he make this a world of despair? Why did he not help the world ages ago? Why does he not help it now? Why should we expect help from priests and preachers who have only added burdens grievous to be borne? They give us superstitions instead of facts—when we ask for bread they give us wind.

Why does not God help us now? If Christ is running this world and he is Jehovah, you might as well send us to the relentless savage who has brained our children as to the Jehovah who inspired David to warble, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

Finally, Dr. Rasmus says, "The last characteristic of the Christ demanded by this age is one who rewards and blesses service."

But Jesus only rewards and blesses priests and preachers, and he does that at the pecuniary expense of the people, who have to perform good secular labor to get the money, all the same as Chinaman when he buys wooden god. When the servant of Jesus goes without food he starves; if he is deprived of water he will perish with thirst; if he falls in the fire he will burn; if he gets his head under water he will drown. Jesus, if he exist, is utterly powerless, or entirely indifferent. Santa Claus fills the children's stockings with goodies; Jesus begs their pennies for the heathen.

Superstition.

Today no intelligent man believes in the existence of devils—no intelligent man believes that evil spirits cause disease—consequently no intelligent man believes that holy bones or rags, sacred hairs or pieces of wood, can drive disease out, or in any way bring back to the pallid cheek the rose of health. Intelligent people know that the bone of a saint has in it no greater virtue than the bone of any animal. That a rag from a wandering beggar is just as good as one from a saint, and that the hair of a horse will cure disease just as quickly and surely as the hair of a martyr. We now know that all the sacred relics are religious rubbish; that those who use them are for the most part dishonest, and that those who rely on them are almost idiotic.

This belief in amulets and charms, in ghosts and devils, is superstition pure and simple.—[R. G. Ingersoll.